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ABSTRACT

This handbook is intended to introduce tutors to literacy work with bilingual students who are fairly fluent speakers of English and who are often to be found in a literacy class for native speakers of English. The introductory section, which deals with literacy and the second language learner, covers influences on and difficulties encountered while learning a second language as well as the processes involved. The next five sections cover the following aspects of helping nonnative speakers of English improve their literacy skills: giving students responsibility (students' expectations and examples); developing writing skills (personal expressive writing, techniques in correcting students' writing, more formal writing, and materials); learning to spell (influence of the mother tongue and ways of developing strategies for spelling); developing reading skills (practical approaches to work with beginning readers, materials, and methods of developing reading skills); and developing language (language in the context of literacy, methods, the role of listening and speaking, and materials). The section on practical approaches for work with beginning readers includes language experience, unfamiliar words, cloze, phonics, and visual recognition, and the section on reading materials contains guidelines for selecting and using texts. (MN)

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LITERACY WORK WITH BILINGUAL STUDENTS

A resource for tutors

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Foreword

This handbook is published at the same time as "ESL/Literacy — an introductory handbook for tutors". Although each book stands on its own and can be used independently, they complement one another. There are, however, some differences of focus.

"*Literacy Work with Bilingual Students*" arises largely from work with students who are fairly fluent English speakers and are often to be found in literacy classes for native speakers. It assumes that the tutor has had some experience of working with bilingual students. (The word *bilingual* refers to people who use more than one language; they are not necessarily fluent in both.)

It is based on a project carried out in a number of classes in ILEA, and thus each chapter provides many examples drawn from what teachers and learners did on the project. As well as offering ideas and approaches, it provides sources and texts for developing reading, writing and language and hopefully will prove to be a valuable resource for tutors wishing to develop literacy skills beyond the first stage.

For an introduction to literacy work, including work with students at more basic stages, "ESL/Literacy — an introductory handbook for tutors", (pub. ALBSU, 1985) provides some useful starting points.

LITERACY WORK WITH BILINGUAL STUDENTS

A resource for tutors

MONICA TURNER

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ALBSU
Adult Literacy & Basic Skills Unit

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writing project, to Joan Billington, joint co-ordinator of the project, for her continuing good humour and support, to Pete Cranston for his ongoing evaluation and encouragement and to Julia Naish and ALBSU for their co-operation in editing and producing this handbook.

A note on gender

In order to aid clarity, I have adhered to the convention adopted by other teaching manuals of referring to students as 'he' and tutors as 'she'.

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Preface

Between 1981 and 1983, the ILEA Special Development Project (ALBSU funded) was set up in order to explore issues related to working with 'orally proficient' second language speakers who required help with literacy. The following two broad categories of students were identified.

1. Those students who had been in this country for a number of years and had acquired rather than been formally taught oral English. They would often refer themselves to Adult Literacy Schemes.

2. Students who had been attending ESL classes and had become orally proficient, but who then required intensive ESL Literacy tuition at a more advanced level.

It was clear that this was an area of concern for tutors working in both Adult Literacy and ESL schemes and it was felt that the project would provide opportunities for tutors in both fields to exchange ideas and explore different ways of

working. The methods and activities outlined in this handbook are based on the work of the project and on discussions, workshops and training sessions which involved tutors working across the ILEA.

Most tutors turning to this handbook will have had some initial training and experience in working with adults in ESL, Literacy or possibly both. It is therefore assumed that:

- they are committed to ways of working which are in essence "student centred";
- they recognise how essential communication skills are in enabling individuals to gain control of their lives and avoid being excluded from taking part in the life and work of this country;
- they view literacy as an integral part of teaching ESL and where a student seeks more specific help with literacy, language development will inevitably form part of the literacy content.

Introduction

There are times when most tutors feel the need for new ideas or to experiment with different approaches to particular problems. Often, hearing or seeing how other tutors work can provide the necessary stimulus and help to generate new ideas. Alternatively it can reaffirm that one's way of working is appropriate. It is hoped that this handbook will provide a similar function. It is not intended as a comprehensive guide, nor to prescribe any one way of working. Rather, it is hoped that it will provide some ideas and suggestions for the flagging tutor working with more fluent second language students developing literacy. It should be noted that no reference is made to working with less fluent speakers and most of the ideas and activities included require some degree of confidence in spoken English. The handbook is divided into sections. Within each there is a discussion of pertinent issues and suggestions for methods of working. This is followed by examples of materials and activities with a brief explanation of how they were used.

Literacy and the Second Language Learner

Influences

Influence of Previous Educational Experience

There are a number of factors which influence all adult learners. Not least among these is their previous educational experience which will strongly influence their confidence, motivation and attitude to learning. As a general rule, with first language adult literacy students, this educational experience may be one of failure. This will not necessarily be true for second language learners who as a group will have had a much wider range of experiences. For example, there are those who are highly literate in their own and other languages, and have achieved good qualifications. Others may be illiterate or only semi-literate in their first language because they have had only limited opportunities to learn, and not because they have 'failed'. Many will have successfully learnt through even more traditional methods than those found within the British

educational system. However, whatever the nature of and degree of success in their previous education, there will almost inevitably be a wide gap between the student's expectations of learning and the tutor's style of teaching. In attempting to bridge this gap, the tutor needs to take account of the student's previous experience. While opportunities need to be provided for them to become more aware of alternative ways of working, students should also be encouraged to evaluate the effectiveness of methods with which they are familiar and build upon those which they feel are successful.

Influence of spoken language

One of the most tangible influences on the development of literacy skills for second language learners is the nature of their spoken English. This depends largely on how and where it was learnt — in their own country, workplace, ESL class, etc — how long they have lived here and the situation in which they live and work. Inevitably there is a wide range of experiences and many variations in the way in which English is spoken. Those who have lived and worked here for a number of years and have had extensive contact with other English speakers will usually be able to communicate fluently and have a good grasp of colloquial forms of English but rarely speak with the same degree of 'accuracy' as those who have learnt more formally. The latter, however, if they have had less contact with spoken English will often lack confidence and have a more limited range of vocabulary. Some students can communicate more easily in written English than in spoken. These variations will inevitably be reflected in their reading and writing and the kind of methods which it is appropriate to adopt.

Literacy in mother tongue

Those students who are literate in their own and possibly other languages will have developed a range of skills and knowledge, some of which can be usefully transferred to reading and writing in English. While they should be actively encouraged to draw upon these skills it is important to identify points at which differences between the student's mother tongue and English give rise to difficulties and interfere with the process of transferring from one written medium to another. For example, unlike English, some

languages are phonically regular (e.g. Bengali, Italian, Turkish). These students, being used to a regular relationship between sounds and letters, may have difficulty in coping with the seemingly chaotic English system. Elsewhere differences in style or register, the organisation of information, etc., may inhibit effective reading and lead to writing which is inappropriate. In order to identify points at which difficulties might arise, opportunities need to be provided for both tutor and student to compare and contrast the mother tongue and English.

Definitions

"Fluent" second language speakers who have had some formal experience of learning English, either in their own country or since their arrival in England, will normally have acquired some literacy skills in English. It is more usual that students who describe themselves as being unable to read and write at all will have learnt to speak English more informally, by living and working here. A higher proportion of these students will also be illiterate or semi-literate in their own language. However, though they often say they are unable to read and write, in many cases they may have acquired very basic skills and be able to carry out simple literacy tasks (e.g. recognise street signs and other public notices, write their name and address, use the A-Z, locate numbers in the telephone directory). Such students are usually very unconfident and it will take time for them to acknowledge and value the range of skills which they are already familiar with. These will however provide a basis on which they can begin to extend and develop their reading and writing.

Among second language speakers, 'true' beginners are usually those with more limited spoken language, and for them aural/oral and literacy skills need to be developed alongside each other. (See "ESL/Literacy — an introductory handbook for tutors".)

Difficulties common to 'fluent' second language speakers who have 'picked up' spoken English informally

If students are illiterate or semi-literate in their own language they may not have a great deal of confidence in their ability to learn to read and write in English. Though in this respect their attitude may be similar to that of first language adult literacy students, they have additional difficulties given that their second attempt is through a totally different language system and one with which they are not totally familiar.

Where students are literate in their first language, differences between their own language and written English may make the process of transferring existing literacy skills to the new medium more difficult, e.g.

- they may be unfamiliar with left to right sequencing and Roman script
- their own language may be phonically regular and they may expect a regular relationship between sounds and letters in English
- similar letters may be used for different sounds, which in the initial stages can be very confusing.

Though 'fluent' in spoken English, these students will have only an imperfect grasp of English syntax, semantic and sound systems and this will influence the development of both reading and writing, e.g.

- In spoken English, 'structural' words such as prepositions, articles, auxiliary verbs, etc., are often unstressed and they are therefore difficult for non-native speakers to hear and to internalise. A characteristic feature of such second language speakers of English is the stringing together of 'content' or 'information' words and the omission of some of these structural ones.

"In my country all house belong government so you can't buy own house. Also very difficult to find a house."

- Second language speakers frequently transfer the 'rules' of their language to English, e.g. omitting articles, using different word order, tense, formation.
- Particular sounds may not occur in the students' own language and they may be unable to hear those or distinguish them from those which are produced in a similar way, e.g. 'p' and 'b'.
- Such students may have a limited range of vocabulary, though they often have a good grasp of colloquial English.
- Having had no 'formal' experience of learning English, students may be unfamiliar with 'grammatical rules' and the language necessary for describing them.

Though these features of the students' language do not necessarily impede their ability to communicate in spoken English, they do influence the development of reading and writing skills. For example, when reading, an imperfect grasp of English syntax makes prediction more difficult. At the same time they have to rely more heavily on context to work out the actual meaning of unfamiliar words, and to discriminate between certain sounds. Naturally, particular features of spoken language will be reproduced in their writing.

The processes involved

Opposite is an analysis of some of the skills and knowledge which those who are literate are able to draw on.

READING

Knowledge of Written Language

- ☐ familiarity with Roman script (upper/lower case, left to right sequencing; alphabetical order; different handwriting/type faces, etc.)
- ☐ recognition of visual/sound correlation, i.e. phonics
- ☐ recognition of units of meaning (words, sense groups, sentences)
- ☐ familiarity with layout/format/overall structure of texts (discourse)
- ☐ internalised knowledge of language (vocabulary; syntax; cohesive devices)

Strategies for Overcoming Difficulties with Unfamiliar Words or Phrases

- ☐ using context (drawing on structure and meaning)
- ☐ using phonic knowledge
- ☐ using letter names
- ☐ using visual information

Access and Survey Skills

- ☐ awareness of places, organisations, texts as reference points

- ☐ use of contents and index pages, titles, headlines, pictures, etc., to anticipate content of material and judge appropriacy.

Ability to Adapt Method of Reading According to Purpose

- ☐ understanding purpose of reading (specific information, curiosity, pleasure)
- ☐ reading with differing degree of intensity, according to purpose (skimming, scanning, reading 'in depth').

Interpretive Reading Skills

- ☐ recognition of different levels of meaning (literal; implied in text; inferred through reading between the lines; differentiating between fact and opinion, etc.)
- ☐ relating new information to existing knowledge — evaluation, criticising, etc
- ☐ recognition of the limitations of written text, and referring to others
- ☐ responding to what has been read (in thought, action, etc.).

WRITING

Handwriting Skills

- ☐ ability to form letters (upper/lower case; cursive)
- ☐ left to right sequencing

Knowledge of Language

- ☐ understanding the structure and meaning of words and phrases (word order, tenses, structures, simple/complex sentence formation; vocabulary, etc.)
- ☐ awareness of how texts are organised
- ☐ familiarity with conventions of spelling
- ☐ awareness of appropriate format and layout (visual)
- ☐ understanding of variations in style and register.

Strategies for Overcoming Difficulties

- ☐ recognition of the value of drafting, redrafting, proof reading, etc.
- ☐ use of dictionary, Thesaurus and other information sources
- ☐ strategies for learning to spell unfamiliar words
- ☐ strategies for overcoming difficulties with grammar or vocabulary

Ability to Adapt Writing According to Purpose

- ☐ awareness of needs of the reader, their knowledge of the subject and possible response
- ☐ ability to make appropriate choices in terms of selection and organisation of ideas and information, style and register

Giving students responsibility

Introduction

Students often come to classes for help with specific 'functional' literacy tasks (e.g. helping children with homework, writing reports and memos for work, coping with difficult forms, etc). While it is important for the tutor to respond to these immediate needs, it quickly becomes apparent that for many students, the development of the necessary skills and knowledge involved in these tasks can only occur in the wider context of the development of more fundamental learning skills. In other words, it is not only the *content* of tuition which is important, but the *process*. Students need to learn how to learn. Central to this is the idea of students taking responsibility for their own learning. As Graham Gibbs puts it in *Teaching Students to Learn: A Student Centred Approach*;

"Developing as a learner is a continuous process, and unless the student takes responsibility for this process — for becoming aware of how he is learning and noticing what works and what does not — then change will be impeded. Instead of making students dependent on expert advice and evaluation, self-evaluation and self-awareness should be encouraged. Only when students can see for themselves what the advantages and disadvantages of different ways of going about a study task are is development likely."

This emphasis on personal responsibility is based on Carl Rogers' 'principles of learning':

"Learning is facilitated when the student participates responsibly in the learning process. When he chooses his own direction, helps to discover his own learning resources, formulates his own problems, decides his own course of action, lives with the consequences of each of these choices, then significant learning is maximised. Independence, creativity and self reliance are all facilitated when self criticism and self evaluation are basic." (Rogers, 1969, pp162-163).

Students' expectations

However, putting these principles into practice within the context of the average Adult Education Institute or off-sight community class is not an easy process. Students' expectations of what should occur in the classroom are firmly rooted in their previous experience of learning. A teacher who wishes to organise learning in what may be for students a radically different way will have to be open about her approach and methodology, discussing these sensitively and in some detail with students, and trying to bridge the gap between their perceptions of appropriate ways of working and her own teaching style. Ultimately, the extent to which students accept responsibility for their own learning depends on the roles adopted by tutor and student and the influence each has over the direction of tuition.

One way of assessing this is to consider the kinds of decisions which have to be made during any period of classroom activity, who makes these decisions, how and why. For example, who usually takes responsibility in each of the following areas? Is it the tutor, the individual student, the tutor and student together or the group?

- ☐ Deciding on the content of lessons.
- ☐ Deciding which materials to introduce.
- ☐ Producing materials (e.g. worksheets).
- ☐ Deciding which methods to adopt.
- ☐ Deciding which particular strategies an individual student should use.
- ☐ Assessing an individual student's progress.
- ☐ Deciding on the organisation of lessons (e.g. group work, individual study).
- ☐ Keeping records of work done.
- ☐ Evaluating lessons (content, methods, activities, techniques).
- ☐ Editing and producing scheme publications.
- ☐ Deciding on the timing and venue.

Students can, in different ways, share in the decisions which need to be made in each of these areas.

Examples

Deciding on the content of lessons

Students' wants and needs should provide the starting point for deciding what to teach. It is relatively easy for tutors to work out the different contexts in which individual students need to function, to assess their present stage of learning and thus arrive at their own understanding of these needs. However, if students are to achieve any kind of independence, it is necessary for them to be able to choose what they want to work on; getting them to articulate their needs and wants and take responsibility for deciding what to do is much more difficult.

This may be because:

- students believe it is the tutor's job to decide what is the best thing for them to do
- they may be able to identify specific areas of difficulty (e.g. spelling, grammar) but be unaware of other areas that need developing

- only by beginning to improve their literacy skills may underlying needs become apparent.

The tutor needs to develop ways of raising the students' awareness of their role in decision making and help them to recognise and articulate their needs.

Checklists and *questionnaires* may be useful as it is easier to make decisions if choices are limited. They can be based on the contexts in which students need to read and write (e.g. work, home, family, leisure, etc.) specific activities (e.g. reading newspapers, letters to schools, memos, etc.), specific skills (e.g. grammar, handwriting, coping with difficult words, etc.), or a combination of these, and space needs to be provided for students to make their own suggestions.

New components can be included as the students' understanding of what particular skills are involved becomes clearer and new needs emerge. Checklists and questionnaires are not very useful on their own. Though they can provide a basis for discussion and a focus for decision making, they should not be a substitute for the constant *dialogue between tutor and students*.

1. THE NEW STUDENT What do you want to do? For what kind of things? How about writing a story so we can look at your writing? I can't spell... I want to learn to spell. For everything. No - I can't spell. I don't want to write stories. 	2. LATER THAT WEEK O.K... How about working on a spelling pack? How was that? Have you thought about what you want to use your spelling for? Didn't like it. It was too long. I have to write notes and leave messages at work 	3. THE NEXT LESSON Let's try writing notes and messages... ... How was that? What about doing some letter writing or some grammar or reading? It was O.K., but I'm bored. I don't know - you tell me. I'll do anything you give me. 
4. A COUPLE OF WEEKS LATER You've tried quite a few things now. What's helped you? What did you enjoy? I liked most things - but I don't know what's best. 	5. A FEW WEEKS LATER Have you looked in the file to see if there's anything you want to try? How did it go? Maybe I'll try to learn some more spelling with the tape. There was too much to do - I think I'll do bits of it again. 	6. LATER THAT MONTH Do you want to use the tape and do some note taking and summarizing? No. I want to write a story today. 

Things you could do - WORKSHOP SESSIONS

(mark off what you would like to do next week)

Date									
writing formal letters									
note taking									
writing notes & messages									
writing reports									
writing about your experiences									
story writing									
handwriting practice									
spelling practice									
reading newspapers									
reading stories									
using library									
using a dictionary									
listening and reading									
grammar									

Add anything else you want to do

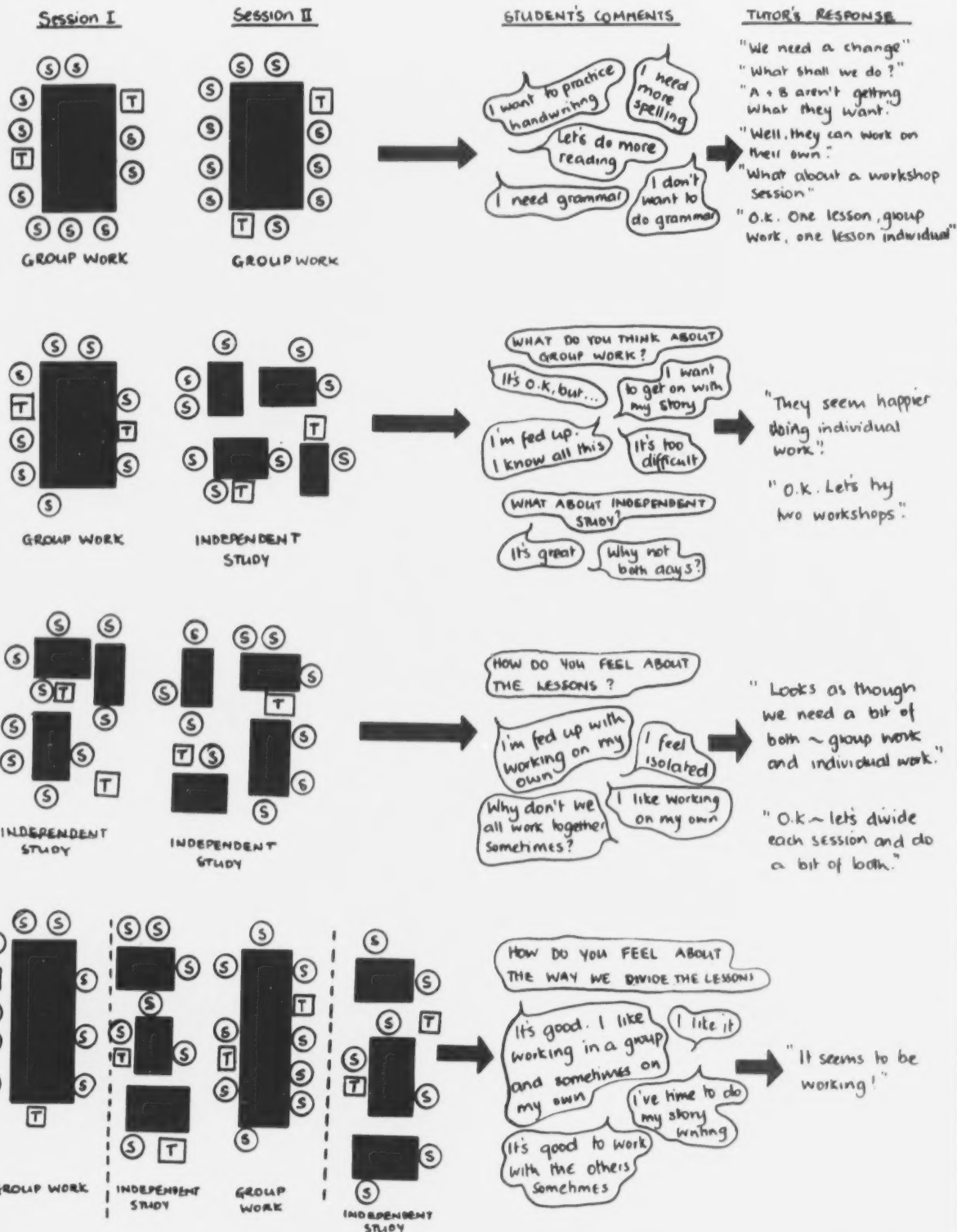
Deciding on the organisation of lessons

Group work or individual study?

This diagram shows how sessions were organised

in an Adult Education Institute ESL/Literacy group, and the changes that occurred during the year. Throughout students were encouraged to comment on the format and suggest alternative ways of working.

DECIDING ON THE ORGANISATION OF LESSONS



Assessment — Involving the student

Almost any reading or writing activity provides information which can help the tutor to identify the student's existing skills, and areas for further development. However, assessment should not be the responsibility of the tutor alone. Anyone tackling a new learning project, be it driving, cooking, hang-gliding or reading and writing, will frequently want to know where they are in the process and where they are going. The capacity for self evaluation is an important instrument for learning, and the ability to observe one's own performance an essential skill to acquire. Students are often more than willing to say what they are bad at, and need constant encouragement to have confidence in their stronger points. They have to learn to articulate not only *what* they can already do, but *how* they do this, and this process involves ongoing discussions between the student and tutor on an individual basis, and also the group as a whole. The following questions could provide a starting point for such a dialogue, though the choice will depend on the students' stage of learning, previous experience of literacy and so on. If literate in their first language, they obviously have a much greater range of experience to draw on, and most of the questions included here would be more appropriate for such students.

Questions about reading

- ☐ Do you (often) read in your own language? If so, what kind of things — newspapers? letters? stories? messages? notices? What about in English?
- ☐ Do you read English newspapers? If so, which do you read?
- ☐ Are you able to find what you're looking for easily? If so, what helps you to do this?
- ☐ What differences have you noticed between newspapers written in your own language and English ones? Is the kind of information the same? What about the organisation, lay-out, pictures, etc?
- ☐ Do you ever receive 'official' letters? Who from? Are there any differences between the way these are written in English and in your own language?
- ☐ How do you usually read — silently, aloud?
- ☐ What do you do if you find new words when you're reading in your own language? What about in English?

Questions about writing

- ☐ Do you (often) write in your own language? If so, what kind of things?

- ☐ If you are writing an 'official' letter in your language, how do you plan what you're going to say? Do you make a list of points, two or three rough copies? What about in English?
- ☐ When you're writing something in your own language, do you ever find it difficult to find the words to say exactly what you mean? If so, what do you do — do you stop and think about it, ask someone else? What about in English?
- ☐ Are there any particular spellings which you find difficult because of differences between English and your language (e.g. the way some sounds are pronounced; using different letters, etc). Have you found any useful ways of remembering how to spell new words in English?

Keeping records

Why keep records?

A record of work done during lessons enables both tutor and student to look back over a period of tuition in order to make a long term evaluation of the appropriacy and effectiveness of learning activities, and plan future work. It can give both tutor and students a sense of direction, particularly important in the absence of course books and externally imposed syllabuses. It is also essential where more than one tutor is working with the same student(s).

Why involve students?

Most of us need some sort of system in order to develop the habits of judging the effectiveness of learning activities we are engaged in. Recording one's own performance is one way of developing such a system, and provides a basis for identifying areas to work on and planning one's learning activities.

What kind of records?

There are various systems for keeping records, e.g. card file box, checklist, record sheets, a list of questions to be answered, a written or verbal (taped) report. The method or combination of methods devised should be agreed upon by both tutor and student. Any information collected must be helpful to the learner; if there is too much or it is too specific it may be confusing. In the initial stages the student may need guidance in selecting what to record and encouragement to be consistent.

DATE	What was the lesson about?	What reading was done ?	What writing was done ?	What was learnt or practised ?

Developing writing skills

Introduction

In order to help the student to improve and develop his writing the tutor needs to be aware of the range of skills involved in a particular writing task, the student's present stage of learning and thus the points at which it is appropriate to provide some support. In the early stages of reading and writing, the student will need a great deal of support and the tutor might introduce activities with a higher degree of control in order to reduce the possibility of failure. Beyond this stage, too much control may result in tasks which are mechanical and meaningless and which deny the student opportunities to draw on experience and knowledge and to experiment and learn through mistakes.

On enrolling for classes, some students may already have identified specific areas of functional writing with which they need help, e.g. meeting training scheme entrance requirements, dealing with letters from school, memos at work. Others may describe their needs in much more general terms, i.e. "Learning to write 'correct' English". While all need to be aware of the particular requirements of more formal writing activities (e.g. layout, style, register), they may gain more confidence and some of the necessary skills by developing personal expressive writing.

L. enrolled in an ESL Literacy class at his local Adult Education Institute because he wanted to be able to write messages and memos at work. He knew that he would then stand a better chance of promotion. For the first few weeks he spent part of each lesson working on these. Though there was some improvement, he began to get bored and dispirited because he wasn't improving fast enough. He talked it over with his tutor and as a result began to experiment with a range of different 'non-functional' writing activities — e.g. writing about personal experiences and from the imagination. He was not as tense about this kind of writing, feeling less pressure to 'succeed', and he wrote with greater confidence and fluency. This had a spin-off when he returned to writing memos and also in other spheres of his life. For example he began

leaving notes and messages for his (English speaking) wife which were written in English — something which he had previously avoided doing.

It seems clear that both forms of writing, personal expressive and more formal, should be included in any programme of work.

Personal Expressive Writing

The main aims are to build confidence and motivation by providing students with the opportunity and necessary encouragement to write about their own ideas and experiences and to draw on their own resources of language. Such an approach has been used with considerable success with adult literacy students. It rests on the following assumptions.

- The way in which students express their ideas verbally is equally valid when getting these down in writing. So long as ideas are communicated effectively, it is not necessary that the language used should conform to 'standard' English. However, students may need a great deal of encouragement to recognise that their own language is acceptable.
- Many literacy students feel that their own ideas and experiences are not worth communicating. Talking these over in a small group in which their contributions are accepted and thus validated can help to develop the confidence necessary for putting ideas, experiences and opinions down in writing.
- Such an approach depends on an informal, relaxed style of classroom organisation, where individuals, including tutors and students, have the chance to get to know each other and gradually build up a relationship of trust and confidence. This kind of relationship necessarily takes time to develop, but without it, students naturally deal only in impersonal, neutral ideas, and the motivation that comes from personal involvement is lacking. The following account is by a tutor working with a

In one of her first attempts at encouraging students to write about their personal experiences, the tutor introduced a range of different substances with quite evocative smells. She hoped that some of these would trigger off associations and memories. Initially, the students talked fairly neutrally about 'general' memories. Towards the end of the discussion, an Iranian student explained how the smell of burnt wood reminded him of the times when, as a university student, he had fearfully burnt his papers and then had to try to get rid of the lingering smell of burning, and also of an occasion when revolutionary guards had made a massive bonfire of books. However, he didn't want to write about these incidents, and at the writing stage retreated into a much less 'threatening' subject — an amusing anecdote.

Experience shows that such students will in time write more readily of such experiences, provided that a relationship of trust is built up.

The approach used by adult literacy tutors for developing personal expressive writing is equally valid when working with second language students. However, it also raises certain problems for the tutor in that it cannot be taken for granted that individual and often highly idiosyncratic variations in students' spoken language are 'acceptable' when writing. While it is important to view their resources of language (English and others) positively, this should not be at the cost of failing to provide the necessary support for them to extend and develop their language (see section 6: Developing Language).

Discussion is particularly important for second language students as it enables them to explore the language which is necessary for expressing what they want to write. It provides a context in which to draw on language which they may know or recognise, but don't normally use, as well as to extend into new areas. It therefore contributes to the students' overall language development which provides a basis for effective communication in both spoken and written English.

Unlike functional tasks the students' personal writing is not associated with 'success' in the outside world and there is less concern with 'accuracy'. They can practise and develop writing skills within a context which is relevant to them, while working at their own pace and at a level which is appropriate for their stage of learning. Both student and tutor are able to identify strengths and weaknesses and this provides a basis for planning future work.

A method for developing expressive writing

Central to the success of this approach is the choice of appropriate materials which are then presented in a way which will stimulate students' interests and encourage them to write. These may be visuals (e.g. photographs, cartoons, pictures, real objects) tapes (stories, items of news) or texts (students' writing, newspaper articles, prompt sheets). The choice will obviously depend on the students' interests and the make-up of the group, though when working with relatively fluent speakers with mixed literacy levels, visuals and tapes pose fewer problems.

Procedure

1. Material is presented in an appropriate way. In discussing issues arising, students are encouraged to give opinions and express their own ideas.

2. Students are asked to select some aspect of the discussion which interests them and to write about it. The aim is to get their ideas down on paper and they are advised to write without worrying about language structure, spelling, vocabulary, punctuation, the order of ideas, etc. Writing on every other line is useful as it leaves enough room for changes and corrections. If they are stuck for words or phrases they can leave gaps or write these in their own language. Some students may have difficulty in simultaneously getting down their ideas and finding the appropriate language. If they are literate in their own language, it may be useful for them to use this in the initial stages in order to get down what they want to say and then transfer what they have written into English. The pros and cons should be discussed with the student.

3. Having completed the first draft, students proof-read what they have written checking language structure, spelling, punctuation, meaning. If possible, they change anything which they see is incorrect, and underline those things which they are unsure of. Other students may be able to help here.

4. Students then discuss what they have written with the tutor:

- *Meaning.* Is this clear? Are the ideas expressed in the way which was intended? How might these be changed, clarified, extended? Is the order of ideas good? Are there any repetitions? Discuss possible alterations.
- *Language Structure.* Are the correct tenses being used? What about other structures? Discuss alternative ways of writing down phrases and sentences, being careful not to change the meaning and ideas.

- **Vocabulary.** Any difficulties in finding the right words? Discuss some words used, encourage students to explore similar or more expressive ones.
- **Spelling.** Any the student is unsure of? How else might these be written? Draw students' attention to other spellings, selecting those which will be most useful. Be careful not to over-correct, (see Learning to Spell section, page 32). Note down some of these spellings for learning.
- **Punctuation and Paragraphing.** Is this clear? Discuss any changes which might add clarity, being careful not to alter meaning. For practical examples of working on these early drafts, (see Correcting Students' Writing section, page 23).

5. Students rewrite the piece, concentrating on alterations agreed on during discussion. This is again proof read by the student/other students/tutor, where appropriate. Some students may continue to work on their pieces over a period of several sessions. During second or third drafts

more attention should be paid to handwriting, and any letters which are confusing for the reader should be identified and modified.

6. Keeping all drafts and final copy provides a useful record for the students and a good yardstick by which they can judge their own progress.

7. Scheme publications, reading evenings, wall magazines or reading their work to the rest of the group provides the opportunity for students to share what they have written. Though they shouldn't be forced into this, the process can be very affirming, and students are normally supportive of each others' work. Typing their writing (on ordinary or Jumbo typewriter) also helps to give it status. Students' work also provides a source of materials on which to base language work, stimulate other students to write, for reading, and so on.

In many of the examples of materials in the following two sections, an account is given of the work specific groups of students did during the project which illustrate the method in question.

GUARDIAN WOMEN

When their only alternative is you

Polly Toynbee

IT WAS RAINING that morning, so several patients didn't arrive at the geriatric outpatients clinic in the Mile End hospital in the East End of London. Dr Silver, the consultant geriatrician, waited patiently.

A wispy woman in her late fifties, whom I shall call Mrs Purves was first into his consulting room. She sat gingerly on the edge of her chair, her short grey hair clinging limply to her head. "It's about my father, doctor," she said quietly. "He's not well, so he couldn't come this morning." Dr Silver looked at the case notes in front of him.

He had seen Mrs Purves's father three months earlier. The old man lived near his daughter and she cared for him. The record said there was nothing much wrong with him physically. Mrs Purves was reported to have rejected various social services offered her. He was reluctant to get out of bed and she didn't encourage him to.

"I can't cope, doctor," she was saying, in her quiet unforceful way. "He needs to be taken in permanently. He falls out of bed, and I can't lift him. He hasn't eaten for four months. Now he wets and dirties himself. Last time he came here he was kept waiting for three hours for an ambulance home, and he hadn't the strength today."

The doctor asked more questions. "He's just a bag of bones. Only drinks milk. And the bedding and sheets... you should see it. I can't cope any more." She was sounding a little desperate now.

The old man's wife had died nine months earlier. He had cared for her for six years, and then had sunk into a decline on her death. "He lies in bed all day, doing nothing. He sent away his radio and TV," his daughter said, shaking her head.

After more questions, Dr Silver said to her, "I don't think I shall find anything very wrong physically. I'm sending for an ambulance to

The Government's policy has been to try to have more old people cared for in the community. Too often 'the community' is women like Mrs Purves

bring him in so I can see him, but I probably won't admit him." Mrs Purves saw she had made little impression. "But I've got my own family, doctor. He won't eat. I clean for him, do everything." She was struggling for words. "Look," she said, drawing up her small frame in a last effort, "put it this way. Supposing he didn't have anyone to look after him, you'd have to take him in, wouldn't you?"

Dr Silver looked her in the eye sternly. "But he has got someone, Mrs Purves. He's got you." Mrs Purves protested. "But that's not fair on me, is it?" Dr Silver looked away from her and told her to go back to the old man's flat and await the ambulance. She left the room dejected.

Dr Silver explained that Mrs Purves was not managing well, but he thought she could be taught and helped to manage better. Such scenes take place several times a day in his surgery. "People build themselves up to a crisis when they come to see me, in the hope of getting their relative taken in."

'But that's not fair'

Later that morning the ambulance went back to the old man's flat. They found him, they reported, "in a collapsed state," and an

emergency ambulance was sent for him. He was wheeled in the outpatients in a wheelchair with a white blanket round him. He looked like a Belsen victim, sunken cheeks and staring eyes, grey, white skin, and an odd kind of smile for anyone who walked by.

He was wheeled into Dr Silver's room, eased by two nurses onto the couch, and a strong acid smell filled the room. He was laid down gently, and it was Dr Silver himself who took off the old man's socks, exposing clawed flakey yellow and black toes. His shirt was clean, now on that morning for hospital, but his trousers were old and filthy. Dr Silver made a preliminary examination of his skeletal frame, the bones prominent through his bluish skin. The nurse tried to remove his trousers and his combinations behind the screen. The younger nurse had tried to turn her head away a few times for fresh air, as they attempted to clean him up. The staff nurse helped, but finally emerged from the screen to say that they'd done the best they could. The faces were so encrusted they could do no more without soaking him in a bath for some time. He had a bed-sore and his scrotum was raw.

Dr Silver tried to assess his mental state. The man didn't

know how old he was, or his address. He didn't know what year it was but kept murmuring "1894, 1894." So, it was decided to admit him for a brief period, to feed him and clean him, to give him an enema, and try to train him out of incontinence.

Dr Silver phoned the hospital administrators. There was no bed available at the Mile End. He phoned Bethnal Green — but there was no bed there either. Dr Silver sighed with resignation. "Well, then, I'll send him home after a bath. It's not actually a life-threatening situation." He was about to call Mrs Purves in to tell her, when his young registrar hurried in and announced, "Walter Barrow's just died in Bethnal Green Hospital. We have got a bed."

Mrs Purves was pleased to hear he was being taken in, though her face fell when she heard it was only for a fortnight. "I can't have him back I can't feed and wash him. You've seen," she said, half apologetic for the state he was in. "He has no life at all." Dr Silver replied, "Well, you are going to have to make a life for him, Mrs Purves." He promised there would be help. She protested help was no use. The incontinence service only came once a week, and she couldn't leave the sheets that long. He wouldn't eat meals on wheels. But the interview was over, and she went away with a polite, "Thank you, doctor."

'I can't. You must'

There is nothing special about the case. Dr Silver has many like it every day of the week. With the growing crisis in geriatric care, he battles against the odds with the inadequate and shrinking resources at his disposal, keeping patients in for as short a time as possible to make room for others in even greater need. Though the population in his inner London area is decreasing, the number of people over 75 is growing. Yet the number of available beds has been cut.

Recent work by Mervyn Eastman, a Principal Adviser with Newham Social Services, has produced alarming evidence that the stresses of caring for old people at home are leading to widespread granny battering. He points to surveys in the United States which show that 40 per cent of those caring for old relatives admit to regularly screaming and yelling at them, 6 per cent use physical restraint, 6 per cent force feed them, 6 per cent threatened to send them to homes, 4 per cent threatened physical violence, and 1 per cent hit them. His own files are now bursting with horrendous stories of carers driven to hitting their demented incontinent, obstinate old relatives.

He points out how little help the old get. In his borough better than some, there are 37,000 old people, of whom 42 per cent are cared for by relatives. Only 5 per cent of them are ever seen by social workers. "Are they all coping well?" he asks. "I doubt it. He estimates that about 15 per cent of them may be in need of help and support, but get little or nothing."

Ten million people now draw the old age pension. The numbers of very old are increasing rapidly and will increase by 50 per cent in the next 15 years. Only 6 per cent of old people get residential care. The need is greater than ever yet in old people's homes, 9,000 beds have been cut back since 1976. An annual 2 per cent extra expenditure would be needed to keep up present inadequate standards with the growth in numbers of the old. The majority of local authorities have made reductions. There are only half as many home helps and meals on wheels provided as there should be, according to DHSS guidelines.

This Government's policy has been to try to have more old people cared for in the community. Yet services in the community have been cut back. The community more often than not means women like Mrs Purves.

Materials

Writing from experience — using texts

The students read a newspaper article, on care of the elderly, taken from the *Guardian*. After they had discussed the content, and it was clear that they had all understood the text, they were asked about the situation in their own countries and whether they thought it was better or worse than in England. Many students in the group had strong feelings on the subject, and gave their opinions vigorously, both at this stage, and in the writing which followed. This is the final draft of a longer piece, written by one of the students.

Writing from experience — using pictures

The tutor chose a range of photographs showing people expressing very different emotions. She began the lesson by talking about 'feelings' and eliciting a range of different words for expressing them. These were written on the board, and the tutor checked that the students all understood. She then laid out the photographs and asked them to select those which demonstrated the various feelings and explain why they thought so. After this, the group began to think about and describe situations in which they themselves had felt angry, excited, bored, and so on. They then chose one specific situation and, working in pairs, described

In India we have extended families. Grandparents from both sides, aunties, uncles, nieces, nephews, brothers, sisters and parents live together. We respect the elderly very much. We think it is a pleasure to look after them. We don't see them as a burden. Actually we enjoy being with elderly people. Unlike English people we won't let our elderly people live apart from us. We take care of them as we take care of ourselves. In Indian families the grandparents are the bosses. They decide about good or bad for the family. We respect their orders or decisions. We believe that if we help the elderly then when we are old our children will help and take care of us, whereas in England almost all parents are separated from their children. Sometimes they stay in the same city but don't visit their old parents, even sometimes when they are sick. Most of them don't come to see them. In England there are many facilities for the elderly, like meals on wheels, old people's homes and so on. In England many old people die but nobody notices or realises that. Their bodies rot and a smell comes from them. Their neighbours complain and then the police come and take bodies out. Even neighbours here are not concerned about elderly people living near their houses. They just don't care about them. When the son hears that one of his parents has died and he is on holiday abroad, he doesn't want to spoil his holidays and stays there and enjoys it. This country is no good for old people, even though they get help from the government. All old people need a nurse when they are old. They deserve someone to take care of them.

it in more detail. The student they were working with was encouraged to ask questions and get the 'narrator' to give as much detail as possible. They were finally asked to write about their experiences.

Some students chose to tape their conversation so that they could listen to it again before beginning to write. Below are pieces written by two of the students.

In 1978 there was an earthquake in Thessaloniki. At that time I was living there ~~there~~

It was about eleven o'clock I was watching television with another girl when we felt the house shaking.

The television broke, the walls cracked and the lamps squashed. All the people ran out and they were screaming wildly.

All night we stayed out. The children were crying. The people who had cars stayed in. But the most people without anything were waiting for the next day in the roads, in the parks, everywhere.

In the morning I travelled to my parents in another town.

Then I felt most scared.

The worst time I felt angry and sad was when my grand mother died. I was sad because she died but was very angry with myself because she was ill and I knew she was going to die and all my family were sitting next to her except me. I was sitting with my cousin talking and playing cards.

I was very angry because I knew that she wanted me to be next to her more than anyone else because she loved me more than anyone else and I love her more ~~the~~ than any one else.

Writing from experience — describing people

A tutor working with one group of students noticed that they had difficulty in giving very detailed descriptions of people. Several lessons were spent exploring relevant vocabulary and language and contrasting different ways of building up descriptions. Students were asked to describe

themselves in terms of both physical characteristics and personality and later to choose another member of the group to write about. Their descriptions were then read out. The other students were asked to guess who was being described, and comment on how accurate they thought each description was. They were then asked to write a written description about someone they knew. This is what one student wrote:

My grandmother was about 5 feet tall, fair complexion, small build. She used to wear a white sari as she was a widow. Her hair was cut short like a man.

She used to get up very early in the morning. She woke up first in the family. I can't remember seeing her lying in the bed in the morning. When we woke up in the morning she had already collected all dead leaves and other rubbish and piled up in the corner of the field. She had already finished her daily routine work before the sun rises in the East. It was quite cold that time of the year. When all other sisters woke up, she set fire to the dead leaves. We all were busy putting nuts in the fire, cooking them and eating them then and there. My mother never approved of this type of activity at this time of the day. She was always afraid for us in case anything happened with the fire. But it was great fun; me, brother and sister enjoyed it very much.

At midday, the other lady who was a distant relative of my grandmother, cooked for her. My grandmother's kitchen was separate from our main kitchen. She was strict vegetarian. She took a bath twice a day and sat quietly with her bead garland and prayed for about half an hour every day. She used to have one meal a day. At night she ate fresh fruits, no cooked meal at all. The widows in those days had to go through with a restricted diet.

She planted many fruit trees in the past, such as mangos, guavas, and different types of fruit were available in one garden and some of them bearing fruits throughout the year.

She never quarrelled or grumbled with anyone. On the contrary, my mother used to tell her off, mostly blamed her for spoiling my father. She did not answer her back. She had enormous patience.

In the afternoon, after her lunch, she sewed hand-made quilts, each one of us had one. She kept herself busy throughout the day.

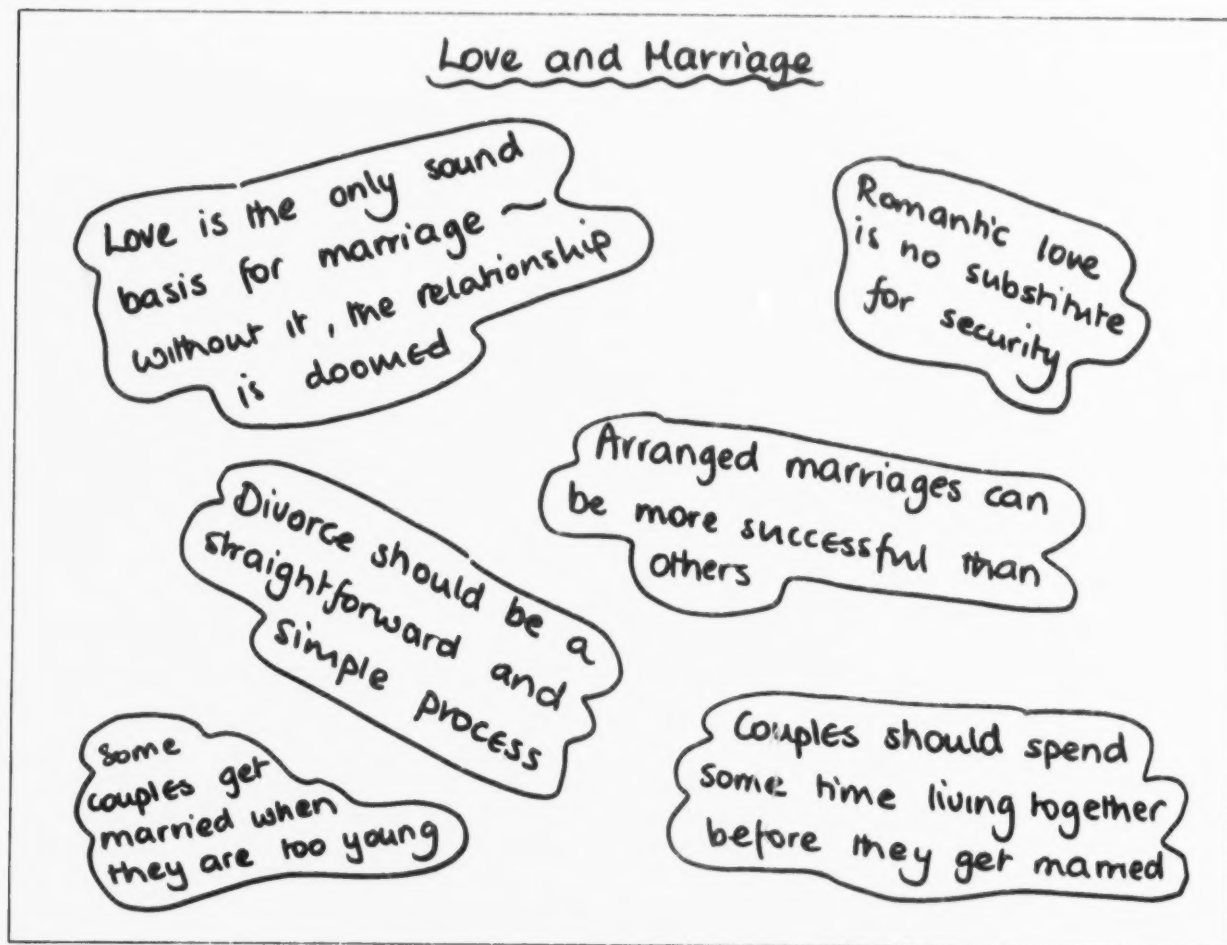
At night we three sisters shared the bed with her. A huge bed was placed in the corner of her room. The bed was protected by the walls and she laid on the unprotected side of the bed. We had to wait for our turn to come to sleep next to her. She used to tell us most beautiful stories every night.

I could not remember seeing her ill or laying in bed for a day. She was polite, kind and helpful to people. She never said anything bad about anybody behind their back. We all loved her dearly.

Giving opinions — using a prompt sheet to stimulate discussion and writing

The following prompt sheet was used initially to stimulate discussion. Working in small groups of three or four, the students read through the various comments, and then talked about whether they agreed or disagreed with them and why. Where

views differed widely, the issue was raised with other members of the group. They were then asked to write about the particular issue which they had felt most strongly about. Some students felt that their arguments did not seem very convincing, and this provided the basis for later lessons exploring language skills appropriate for expressing opinion, arguments, etc.



LOVE, MARRIAGE, DIVORCE . . .

I don't think love is the only thing in marriage. Understanding each other is more important.

Life in general is uphill all the way, so if a married couple have a good relationship they should get through their problems in life.

If the relationship is very bad, and the atmosphere is tense, and there is no laughter, it is better to divorce.

Probably, if it was more difficult to get married they would give more thought before they divorce.

Writing from experience — using smells and sounds

A range of different substances, with strong and quite evocative smells were collected and put in small containers. These included a piece of charred wood, a few leaves of fresh basil, an orange segment, some baby powder, a rag soaked in diesel oil, a few drops of camphor, a piece of sandalwood, a few drops of rose water. Students were asked to identify the different smells, to think about any which had particularly strong associations for them, and to describe memories which they evoked. Some talked about additional smells with which they had strong associations. They were then asked to choose their most interesting 'memory' and write about it. A similar activity was organised based on a series of taped 'sounds', e.g. a thunderstorm, police siren, birds and animals, different kinds of music.

MEMORIES

Think about the following smells and sounds. What do they remind you of?

The smell of smoke reminds me of _____

The sound of rain reminds me of _____

The smell of oranges reminds me of _____

The smell of burning rubber reminds me of _____

The sound of traffic reminds me of _____

The smell of the sea reminds me of _____

The smell of animals reminds me of _____

Which memory was most interesting? Now see if you can write more about this. _____

THE SMELL OF SMOKE REMINDS ME OF . . .

One very hot summer, in Mauritius, I and my friend were sitting under the shade of a tree. I was about six years old. We were both talking. I felt my left arm beating and I told her that something bad might happen to me. She said to me, "Don't be superstitious, it can happen to anybody." We were sitting in the garden and she told me to talk about different things like flowers or how work was going at school. Suddenly I heard shouting: "Fire, fire." It was eleven o'clock in the morning and in the month of March. I rushed and I saw that it was my cattle house on fire. My elder brother telephoned the Fire Brigade. They came immediately to the spot and they started putting out the fire. The crowd who was standing by helping as well. They were throwing sand and water. The cattle house was built out of dried sugar cane leaves. The flames were rising higher and higher. It was a horrible smell. The place was very noisy because people were shouting, "Save the cattle." I had liked my cattle. I was crying, and somebody was holding my hand but I cannot remember who he was. Despite all these efforts we could not save the cattle. I was shocked on seeing my two cows dying. I stayed in the hospital for about two weeks, which I hated. My mum, dad and brothers and sisters were very sad and they could not eat properly for several weeks.

Danwantee Pullet

Typist — Lucinda Moona

Reproduced from 'Memories' a magazine of student's writing Preparatory group, City and East London College, Bunhill Row. 1981.

Imaginative writing — using key words as a stimulus

For some students, making up fictitious stories is an interesting alternative to writing from experience. Here, students were provided with a selection of key words. Some were quite concrete, and suggested a context for the story, while others were more evocative. After checking that they had understood the meaning of all the words, students

worked in pairs, discussing possible story lines. Some continued to work together while others wrote their stories independently. In this lesson, key words provided the necessary stimulus and framework for their writing. An alternative is to introduce a random selection of real objects and pictures (e.g. an onyx egg, a boot-lace, a magnifying glass, pictures of people or places, an airline ticket), and get students to build up a story around some of them.

Story Writing

evening hill alone fire
rain T.V. music thunder
storm door broken glass
chimney wind clock

crash bang tap whirr scrape
knock rattle buzz tinkle
creak
pitter patter whisper shout scream
howl crunch whimper squeak
rumble crackle hum whistle
hoot

It was a dark, cold, windy night....

I was driving home very late that evening when going down the hill, I lost control of my car and crashed into a tree. I got out and banged the door so hard that the glass broke. I was furious as I had to walk about five miles to get home.

It was raining and I had just heard on the radio that there were going to be very strong winds and a storm.

After I had been walking for 20 minutes I saw a light in my neighbour's house and decided to knock on the door. They were watching TV and invited me for a drink. We sat in front of the wonderful fire they had in their sitting room. The crackle of the burning wood was so loud that we could hardly hear the TV... then we turned it off and stayed with the pitter patter of the rain and the howl of the wind.

12 o'clock. Midnight.
 On the top of a hill.
 Raining.
 Alone.
 Thunder breaks the quiet silence
 around.
 A dark, cold, windy night.
 All around invites screaming.
 Because of fear, a distant chimney has
 not been seen.
 There it was.
 We started going there.
 Distant howling accompanied us.
 Still raining.
 A light became closer and closer.
 A whispering could be heard.
 Music came to us.
 We saw people.
 Desperate knocking.
 The door was opened.
 People! A great elderly couple,
 wonderful people!
 Safe!
 We had gone for a walk to the forest.
 We had got lost
 Teenage, a lovely time . . .

Correcting students' writing

If students are to learn to write independently, they must be fully involved in assessing and correcting their own work, as this process helps them to value their own judgement and develop the strategies necessary for working on their own. In discussions between student and tutor, the emphasis should not only be on specific points of grammar or spelling, but also on how the ideas are expressed and whether their writing communicates what they had intended it to. If, because of the constraints of time and the size of the group it is necessary for the tutor to take the students' work in at the end of the lesson, she should avoid 'writing in', by using a series of symbols in the margin, e.g. T-tense, V-vocabulary, Sp-spelling, P-punctuation, W.O.-word order, etc. Once students have developed an awareness of some types of error this process can be taken further and tutors can

simply use an asterisk to indicate that there is something the student needs to look for rather than identify the type of error. In this way students can continue to work on their writing the following lesson, either independently, or with another student. Encouraging students to check each other's work and provide support at any stage in the lesson can also help them to become less dependent on the tutor's judgement and become more self reliant.

How much correction is done will depend on the individual student's stage of learning and the purpose of the writing. The tutor may feel that he will lose confidence if all errors are identified, and that it would be better to focus on only a few areas. If this is so, she should discuss this openly with the student and explain her rationale. If errors remain in final drafts, the student should be aware of this. The tutor should also consider the issue of 'accuracy' as defined by the norms of standard English — and 'fluency' in writing, and therefore what constitutes 'error'. The degree of 'accuracy' needed will depend largely on the purpose of the piece of writing, for readers have different expectations in different contexts. For example, the student who is filling in an application form for work or college will have to achieve a higher degree of 'accuracy' in his supporting statement than if he was writing a narrative of his experiences in a diary or for friends. Because of the reader's expectations, 'inaccuracies' may actually jeopardise the success of the application, and the student needs support in meeting the requirements of situations such as this. Personal expressive writing is a different issue. Through this, students begin to evolve their own personal style of writing. For the second language student this will be strongly influenced by the way they express themselves in their own language. There may be idiosyncracies in the particular style of writing or language used which reflect the individual's way of communicating in English. This gives the reader a sense of the writer's voice and adds interest and vitality to the writing. Too much emphasis on 'accuracy', may result in a final draft of the student's writing which seems sterile. 'Over-correction' of expressive writing should therefore be avoided.

Working on the first draft

Here is an example of the first draft of a student's writing. The original piece of writing has been typed up and coded for this book in order to demonstrate to the reader how the tutor working with this student approached correction. The code used here was *not* used on the original, but shows which points could be picked up and discussed with the student. It is crucial that the tutor selects which points to discuss with the student — the student may lose confidence if all the errors are identified at the same time.

CORRECTING STUDENTS' WRITING

Ia. THE FIRST DRAFT

This picture whic I pick up remind me of my a first part of orly age part of my life. Wen I was I still rimember now when When I usts usteu used to go to the water mil wed my fader farder father. I took all day we usts used to spend all day there. I was for guist 8 or 9 yese old when was the The fascinated part was was when wen the grain wast whent dow to the mill and after af of alf houre ceme out wilde flour. The all process was worry verry interesting. I can giast inmagine now all these wieles and belts going round, from the orly morning to the verry leate evening. Every gutun we used to took lot of sack of grain to be separate from the weeds. I can not giast I can't inmagine now wath happened to the old mill, much is gone I hope he still there meoby has a preserved antiche beulding. So if I go back there one day I hope to seem in see it again. if it is still there.

~~~~~ ALTERATIONS MADE BY THE STUDENT

- o PUNCTUATION
- == SPELLING
- TENSES
- SENTENCE STRUCTURES

### Ib. WORKING ON THE DRAFT: TUTOR'S NOTES

#### Students' feelings on the story

- more than written before.
- missed out about why the grain was separated.
- tried to use words, even if not sure of the spelling.
- worried about correct translation of 'vazza'.

#### Punctuation. o

- "Forgot to put it in"

#### Spelling. ==

Student was aware of: w/wh use

Student was not sure of: used / father / fascinated / wiesles / giast / antiche beulding / wilde.

#### Drew attention to + corrected.

- mis-spellings - most of which were 1 or 2 letters in a word.
- all/whole, alf/helf
- listening to final sound in a word. eg. down

#### Follow up exercises.

w/wh and 'h'.

#### Tenses. Q. When did this take place?

- A. A long time ago
- Q. What tense should it be written in?
- A. Oh! The past tense.

#### Other Sentence Structures

- early age / part of my life. St. not sure which one to use.
- lot of sack → reference to plural / singular.
- 'a preserved antique building' - "what do you mean?"
- "They cannot knock it down. Like here, they preserve old buildings. I don't know how to say it" → preservation order.

## More formal writing

In emphasising the importance of personal expressive writing for the development of writing skills, it is important not to overlook the more formal writing requirements which students may have. Most will, at some point, need to deal with official letters and forms, e.g., in relation to work, family, finance, housing, etc. Though in some instances it is common for certain members of the family to take responsibility for dealing with these matters, circumstances often change. It is not unusual for students to be referred or to seek help with literacy after such a change, e.g. the removal, marriage or death of a member of the family who had previously taken on this responsibility. Other students may have very specific and on-going needs which have prompted them to come to class, e.g. dealing with reports and memos, and they will look to the tutor to provide help in these areas.

Though students develop a range of skills and a great deal of confidence through practising expressive writing, this will not be adequate in enabling them to deal with official letters, forms, etc., effectively. There are certain features, including the choice of language, layout, register, style, appropriacy, etc, which are specific to different types of formal written English and of which the students need to be made aware.

Some students who are literate and confident in dealing with the requirements of formal writing in their own language may be able to transfer these skills into English quite easily. Others may have developed a style of formal written language in their mother tongue which is inappropriate for use in English. Whilst accepting that definitions of what is acceptable are widening, it is important to help students to identify usage which would generate a negative response in a particular situation. It may be useful to look at this letter and decide which sections should be identified to students as being inappropriate.

Unlike the groups of students outlined above, those who are not literate in their first language will need to be introduced to the range of skills involved in more formal writing.

In helping students with more formal writing, the tutor has to distinguish between those which are on-going or longer term needs and those which are urgent, but only short term. Below are practical ideas for dealing with these differing needs.

- Encourage students to use the time in class to deal with letters or forms which they may be having difficulty with. This will help the tutor identify needs and specific areas of difficulty and may provide a basis for future work.
- Provide appropriate support for students working on individual tasks, e.g. if the student needs to fill in a Driving Licence application

ANJARI SINGH  
147 KING ALFRED ROAD,  
LONDON N.E.29

DATE: 20.12.79

Dear Sirs,

Re; COURSE NUMBER: EL52  
Post-graduate Course in Business Management,  
CLINTON COLLEGE, 65 COLLEGE ROAD

I intend to attend a course in your college and chosen subject is Business Management. I am at present working as a assistant accountant in local Gas Showrooms

Please be informed that I am living in this great Country of Philosophers and Poets since nearly ten years. I have had the opportunity to study for a few years at the University, work in different Establishments, face different situations and challenges, teach in different schools, organise various cultural functions.

I qualified MSC from Punjab University and my birthday is 20.12.43.

I will be highly grateful if you very kindly allow me to attend the course.

Yours sincerely,

Anjari Singh

form, provide a sample form with simplified version for him to work through.

- Suggest ways in which students can 'ease the load' by recording and storing information for future use, e.g.
  - by keeping a written record of personal information (name, address, national insurance number, details of driving licence, bank account, etc.).
  - by keeping a list of numbers in written form at the back of the cheque book, if appropriate.
  - by keeping 'models' of standard letters with possible variations (e.g. letter explaining child's absence from school).
- Identify areas which might constitute a 'common core' of needs for students within the group (e.g. taking telephone messages, writing formal letters) and integrate these with other activities. For example, writing letters in response to reading a newspaper article, linking job or college application forms to a role play of an interview; filling in an Accident Report form as a follow up to a newspaper report or picture story.
- If students want to work on specific areas, not shared by other members of the group e.g.

memos for work, report writing, etc., provide opportunities for this through individual study.

- Introduce a range of different approaches and methods (e.g. discussing, planning, noting key information, drafting, proof reading).

## Materials

### Memos for work

These are two drafts of a memo which one student had had to write at work the previous week. Initially he had been concerned with spelling and grammar, but after writing the initial draft, he was asked to think about the content of the memo. Had he included all the necessary information? Was the order in which he'd written this good? Was it clear from the beginning what the message was about? Would the person who received it know exactly what he was expected to do? By concentrating on these broader 'discourse skills', the second draft was much clearer. Only then did he begin to select areas of language and vocabulary to work on, concentrating on those which he would need to use most frequently.

|         |                        |  |
|---------|------------------------|--|
|         | date <u>3-11-1982</u>  |  |
|         | to <u>Shift leader</u> |  |
| Holborn | <u>370 Fox court</u>   |  |
| Reading | ref                    |  |

Can you arrange to pay a taxi from Reading, don't forget to ask the receipt for the money; the money are in the safe I spend arrived about 23.30 which 3 tapes for 370 very very urgent for 370, also don't forget to record the time when the taxi arrived.

|         |                        |  |
|---------|------------------------|--|
|         | date <u>3-11-1982</u>  |  |
|         | to <u>Shift leader</u> |  |
| Holborn | <u>M 300</u>           |  |
| Reading | ref                    |  |

Peter  
I received a call from M300; Reading. they send a taxi which 3 tapes & hand arrived about 23.30 can you arrange to pay the cost of the taxi, the money are in the safe don't forget to ask the receipt these the paper are very urgent, can you take to 370 ASAP

L  
initial

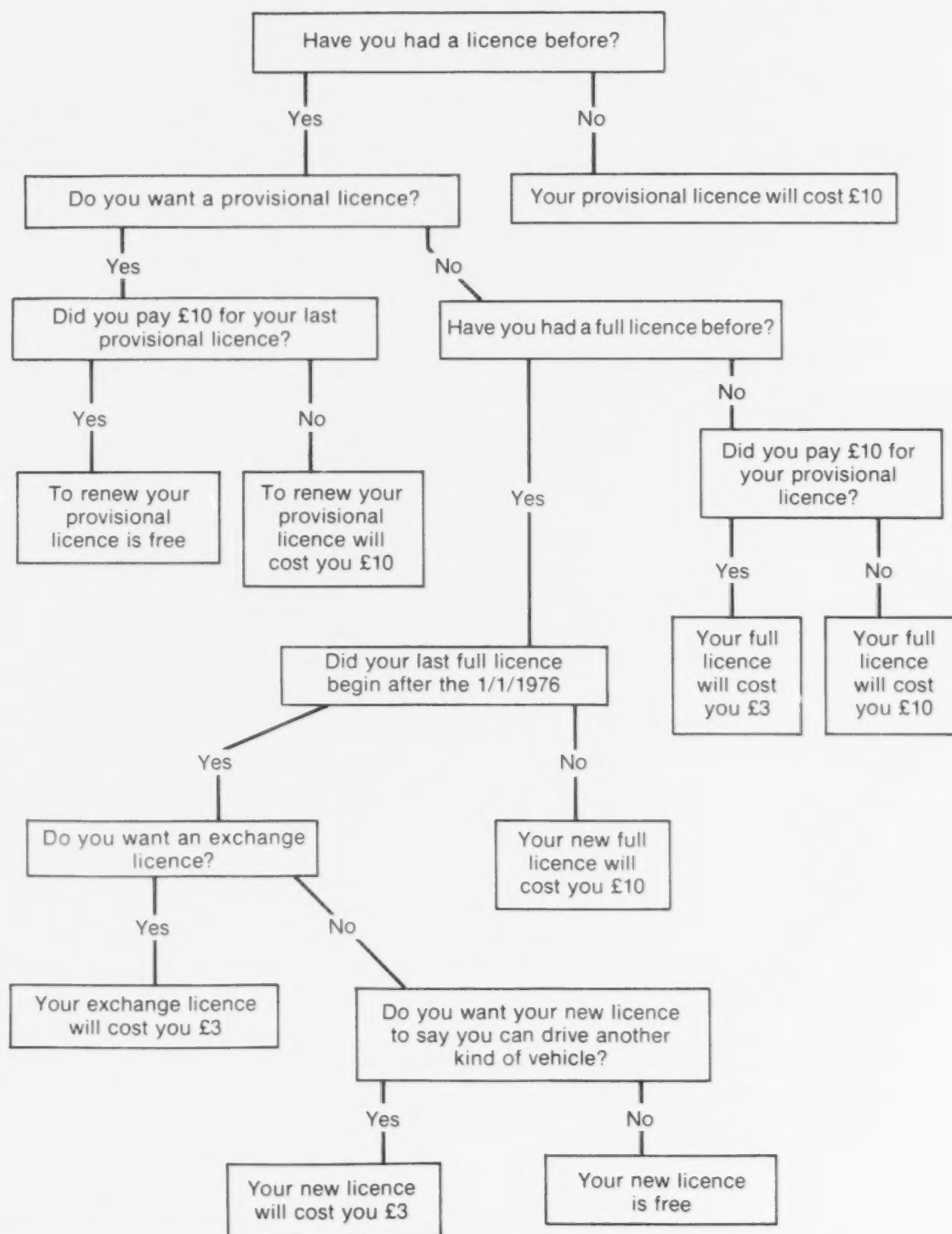
## Dealing with difficult forms

These are examples of workcards prepared to help students to understand and compare difficult forms when the need arises. In this particular set — Application for a Driving Licence — there is an introductory card with a flow diagram for the student to work out the cost of his licence, six cards

with a simplified key explaining different sections of the form and a series of flashcards with key vocabulary. Each card is mounted and covered with transpaseal for durability.

(Materials reproduced by kind permission of Hammersmith & Fulham CRE Neighbourhood Adult Literacy Scheme).

### How much will your licence cost ?



# Application for a Driving Licence

You must use a black pen to fill in this form.  
You must write all of it in capital letters.

This is what you must write.

Please read Notes then complete in **BLACK INK** and **BLOCK LETTERS**

## 1 Applicant

a. Surname 4  
Christian or forenames 5

Please tick box or state other title such as Dr, Rev.  
b. Mr ☐ 1 Mrs ☐ 2 Miss ☐ 3 6  
Other title

Your full permanent address in Great Britain (see note on left)  
c. Address 7  
Post Town 8  
Postcode (Your licence may be delayed if the postcode is not quoted) 9

d. Please tick box 10  
Male ☐ 1 Female ☐ 2

e. Please enter your date of birth 11  
Day Month Year

f. Have you ever held a British licence (full or provisional)? Answer either YES or NO 12  
If YES, please enter your Driver Number (if known) in the box below (and make a separate note of it).

Your surname, that is your last name.

Your first names.

Tick, Mr, Mrs, or Miss.

Where do you live?

Look at the third line. This is where you write London.

If you are a man, tick (✓) the box with male by it.

If you are a woman, tick (✓) the box with female by it.

When were you born?

Put the date of the month, the number of the month and the year you were born.

Have you had a licence before? If yes, put its number in the box.

### **Formal letters**

Here the students are given a situation and then helped to decide how to word the formal letter by being given a series of choices or being able to provide their own version.

## **A LETTER OF COMPLAINT**

Mrs. Brown bought a dining table at Holmes Furnishings, Battersea High St., S.W.11., on 5.4.82. She paid £190 in cash in the shop. On 7.4.82 the shop came to deliver the table, but brought the wrong one, a much cheaper table. The delivery man said he could not take the table away because he would be unable to unload the other items on the van. He said he would come back the following day, but did not. Mrs. Brown and her husband each had to take a day off work. Mrs. Brown phoned the shop manager on 9.4.82, who said he didn't have the table in stock but would order one from the manufacturers. Four weeks passed. On 10.5.82, Mrs. Brown phoned the shop again. The manager said the manufacturers were on strike. Mrs. Brown then wrote to the shop's head office:

Holmes Furnishings Head Office,  
67 Corporation Street, Birmingham 10.

### A LETTER OF COMPLAINT

Help Mrs. Brown to decide how to word her letter.

31, Elm Park Cres.,  
Tooting,  
London S.W.17  
14.6.82

Holmes Furnishings Head Office,  
67 Corporation St.,  
Birmingham 10.

Dear Sirs,

- 1.(a) I'm furious about my treatment by your Battersea branch.  
(b) I would like to draw your attention to my recent purchase at your Battersea branch.  
(c) I want to complain about my treatment by your Battersea branch.  
(d)
- 2.(a) Two months ago I bought a dining table for £190 at your Battersea store.  
(b) On 5.4.82 I bought a mahogany dining table for £190 at your Battersea store.  
(c) On 5.4.82 I bought a very expensive table.  
(d)
- 3.(a) The delivery date was agreed for 7.4.82  
(b) The shop said they'd bring it on 7.4.82.  
(c)
- 4.(a) They brought the wrong one.  
(b) The wrong table was delivered.  
(c)
- 5.(a) The delivery men agreed to return the following day.  
(b) They said they'd exchange it the next day.  
(c)
- 6.(a) They didn't turn up.  
(b) My husband took the day off work but no-one came.  
(c)

- 7.(a) I phoned the manager to tear a strip off him.  
(b) I phoned the manager to ask for an explanation.  
(c) On 9.4.82 I phoned the store manager.  
(d)
- 8.(a) He said they were out of stock.  
(b) He said they had made a mistake.  
(c) He said they no longer had the table in stock.  
(d)
- 9.(a) He promised to order another.  
(b) He said he'd get another from the manufacturers.  
(c)
- 10.(a) I heard nothing for four weeks.  
(b) I didn't hear a thing for ages.  
(c)
- 11.(a) When I phoned the shop the manager said the manufacturers were on strike.  
(b) I phoned the shop again on 10.5.82. The manager said the manufacturers were on strike.  
(c)
- 12.(a) Could you please give this matter your urgent attention.  
(b) I'm sick and tired of waiting.  
(c)
- 13.(a) If you don't act immediately I'll go to my solicitor.  
(b) If I hear nothing from you within the next couple of weeks I shall have to take up this matter with my solicitor.  
(c)
- 14.(a) I hope you can settle this matter on my behalf as soon as possible.  
(b) You'd better be quick.  
(c)

Yours faithfully,  
Ann Brown (Mrs.)

## Learning to spell

### Influence of mother tongue

Second language students face specific difficulties with spelling because of differences between English and their own language.

- There may be no equivalent in their own language (eg. 'f' does not exist in Vietnamese — the sound is represented by 'ph').
- The same letter may be used to indicate a different sound (eg. B is pronounced as a 'V' and P is an 'R' in Greek).
- There may be no equivalent sound or sound combination in the students' own language (eg. no 'h' in Italian; no initial 'j' in Bengali or Vietnamese; no consonant clusters in Cambodian — Chinese).
- In many languages, spelling is phonically regular (eg. Bengali, Italian, Spanish), and the irregularities and complicated spelling patterns of English will seem very confusing.

Second language speakers who are literate in their first language will have internalised certain rules about the relationship between sound and symbols which will not necessarily apply to English.

For those students who are not literate, it will be their first attempt at learning the relationship between sound and symbol, and unlike native speakers they will be using a sound system with which they are not totally familiar. This by no means invalidates a phonic approach to spelling. However, it creates a greater need for students to develop other strategies (eg. visual) for learning how to spell. The emphasis should be on developing appropriate learning methods rather than accumulating endless lists of *new words*.

### Developing strategies for spelling

#### Where to begin

As it is only necessary to be able to spell those words which we want to use in writing, the student's own written work provides the most

appropriate starting point for deciding which words to concentrate on. At the proof-reading stage, (see *Developing Writing Skills*, p.14), the student can try to identify any spellings he is unsure of and attempt to correct these. At this point, the dictionary is a useful tool for self-correction — used earlier it may interrupt the flow of thought and undermine confidence. The tutor or other students can then help to identify any other spelling errors, and he should then decide which spellings it would be useful to work on. Initially, it is better to choose only three or four words though the number may increase as the student becomes more confident. The selection should be based on the frequency and usefulness of words and whether it is possible to generalise from them i.e. regular spelling 'patterns' such as 'nation', 'station'. Eventually the student will be able to make these decisions with less tutor support.

#### Remembering new spellings

Having decided which words to work on, the student then needs to find the best way of memorising the words. 'Look, cover, write, check' is one of the most effective ways of committing spellings to the long term memory, but it may be necessary to combine this with other strategies for remembering different words, e.g. underlining the difficult bit, using mnemonics, looking for words within words, etc. The student also needs to be systematic in recording new spellings so that they can be continually revised and checked. It is useful for students to keep a separate note book or a record sheet at the front of the folders. If new spellings are contextualised in a sentence, students can 'test' each other by dictating these sentences during spare moments in the lesson. A handout for students which summarises these different ways of remembering new spellings is included below.

#### Recognising spelling patterns

The student needs to be able to deduce regularities or 'patterns' rather than learn 'rules' of spelling, e.g. by working out the differences between *mat*, *mate*: *tap*, *tape*, etc., or perhaps by identifying groups of words with similar features, e.g. *who*, *where*, *when*. It is also useful to discuss phonic differences between the student's first language and English. The more aware both student and tutor become, the easier it will be to recognise which patterns or 'rules' can be

transferred to English and which are inapplicable, and therefore need to be adapted or ignored.

## Practice

Having begun to recognise particular patterns, the student needs to practise using these through exercises and in his own writing. Unfortunately many literacy materials designed for first language literacy students are linguistically and/or culturally inappropriate for use with second language students, for example:

- many seemingly commonplace words chosen for their phonic regularity may be unfamiliar to ESL students, e.g. mop, hen, bat, tub, etc.
- first language students would have no difficulty in providing words using 'kn' spelling for the following sentences.

".....in shining armour are usually found in story books."

"Boy Scouts learn to tie different kinds of....."

"I bought my mum a pair of frilly pink..... for her birthday."

Most ESL students would have difficulties with each of these. It is therefore necessary for tutors working with these students to devise materials incorporating vocabulary and contexts with which they are familiar.

The tape recorder is an invaluable aid when students are working on specific areas of spelling as it enables them to simultaneously focus on sounds and their visual representations, also by providing taped exercises (e.g. minimal pairs discrimination, cloze dictation) and accompanying texts and answer sheets the students can work at their own pace and check their own work. The material can also be used in small groups where students are practising common areas and is available at a later date for revision.

Games and crossword puzzles incorporating the spellings being learnt also provide useful practice and revision. As the students become more confident, they can devise these and other practice activities themselves, using words which they have been practising and incorporating them into the grid with the help of a scrabble board. Devising clues is a useful exercise in itself as it encourages students to define and experiment with the meaning of words. Other activities are Hangman, anagrams and word ladders.

## IDEAS FOR HELPING YOU TO REMEMBER HOW TO SPELL NEW WORDS

Look at your writing and decide which new spellings would be most useful to learn. Choose only a few to begin with.

Look at each word. Decide which bit is difficult and try to work out a way of remembering it. Here are a few ideas:

- underline the difficult bit eg. remember, building
- find words you know with the same pattern eg. fright, light, sight
- look for words inside a word eg. capacity → cap-a-city
- work out a trick for remembering eg. 'to separate' = 'to part'
- change the way the word sounds eg. Wed-nes-day

Work out a system for memorizing and revising the word. — This kind of record sheet might be useful.

| NEW WORD | FIRST TRY | SECOND TRY | NEW WORD IN SENTENCE  |
|----------|-----------|------------|-----------------------|
| frighten | frighten  |            | The dark frightens me |
|          |           |            |                       |
|          |           |            |                       |
|          |           |            |                       |

1. WRITE the word.
2. LOOK at it carefully and say it.
3. COVER the word and write it again.
4. CHECK that you spelt it correctly. If not try it again.

Repeat the next day and then two or three days later. If you write the word in a sentence, you can get someone to dictate it to you to check you remember it.

**Spelling Practice — Using the tape recorder for students to work independently**

These exercises are examples of a series designed to focus on particular spelling patterns. As they are

recorded on tape, students are able to work at their own pace on areas related to their specific spelling needs, though where students share similar difficulties, they can work in pairs or small groups. Providing the answers enables students to check

SPELLING PRACTICE - WORDS BEGINNING WITH 'h'



Exercise I

Listen carefully to the tape. You are going to hear only one of each of the following pairs of words. Underline the word you hear. The first is done for you.

- |               |              |              |               |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| 1. at, hat    | 4. hill, ill | 7. hear, ear | 10. arm, harm |
| 2. art, heart | 5. all, hall | 8. and, hand | 11. ate, hate |
| 3. hit, it    | 6. heat, eat | 9. is, his   | 12. hair, air |

Now check the answers. Listen again for words you're not sure about -

Exercise II

Listen carefully to the following conversation. Then rewind the tape and listen to it again. This time try to decide whether the words in brackets ( ) begin with an 'h'. Cross out the wrong spelling. The first has been done for you.

A. (~~Have~~) you (~~eard~~ heard) about (~~Helen~~ elen) ?

B. (~~Heard~~ Eard) what ?

A. She's (~~ad~~ had) an (~~accident~~ haccident) ... it was last night (~~has~~ as) she was (~~on~~ hon) (~~er~~ her) way (~~home~~ ome)

B. Was she badly (~~urt~~ hurt) ?

A. Well she (~~had~~ ad) to go to (~~ospital~~ hospital) ... they kept (~~er~~ her) in (~~overnight~~ hovernight)

But she's O.K. now. Looks a bit funny though. She cut (~~er~~ her) (~~ead~~ head)

and (~~ad~~ had) to (~~have~~ ave) about (~~eight~~ height) stitches - so they've shaved

all (~~her~~ er) (~~air~~ hair) (~~off~~ hoff) !

Now check the answers. If there are any mistakes go back and listen again.

their own work independently of the tutor. The exercises included here were produced for use by an Italian student who had difficulty in spelling words beginning with the letter 'h' — there is no initial 'h' in Italian. The first is a series of minimal

pairs (pairs of words which are distinguished by a single sound) for initial sound discrimination; the second is for discrimination within a context and the third is a cloze dictation in which the sound has to be recognised and produced in writing.

### Exercise III

You will now hear a short story about an old man who is going to visit a friend in hospital. Listen carefully. Don't write yet. The story will be repeated. The second time you hear it there will be short pauses for you to fill in the gaps below. If you don't have enough time, stop the tape and listen again.

The \_\_\_\_\_ man \_\_\_\_\_ been at \_\_\_\_\_ day. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ past \_\_\_\_\_ put on \_\_\_\_\_, locked  
the door and, clutching some flowers in \_\_\_\_\_  
walked slowly \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ towards the \_\_\_\_\_.  
\_\_\_\_\_ could \_\_\_\_\_ the sound \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ beating \_\_\_\_\_ went through the swing doors  
\_\_\_\_\_ the ward. \_\_\_\_\_ was \_\_\_\_\_ looked \_\_\_\_\_  
for Annie's bed, but couldn't see \_\_\_\_\_. Then a nurse came  
\_\_\_\_\_ towards \_\_\_\_\_. She took \_\_\_\_\_ by the \_\_\_\_\_  
and with a big smile, lead \_\_\_\_\_ down the ward. He couldn't  
\_\_\_\_\_ what she was saying, but suddenly \_\_\_\_\_ knew Annie  
was going to be \_\_\_\_\_

Now check your answers

## ANSWERS

- |          |         |         |         |          |          |
|----------|---------|---------|---------|----------|----------|
| 1. hat   | 3. hit  | 5. hall | 7. hear | 9. his   | 11. hate |
| 2. heart | 4. hill | 6. heat | 8. hand | 10. harm | 12. hair |

A. Have you heard about Helen?

B. Heard what?

A. She had an accident... it was last night as she was on her way home

B. Was she badly hurt?

A. Well she had to go to hospital... they kept her in overnight.

But she's O.K. now. Looks a bit funny though. She cut her head and had to have about eight stitches - so they've shaved all her hair off!

The old man had been at home all day. At half past eight he put on his hat, locked the door and, clutching some flowers in his hand walked slowly up the hill towards the hospital. He could almost hear the sound of his own heart beating as he went through the swing doors into the ward. He was afraid as he looked around for Annie's bed, but couldn't see it. Then a nurse came hurrying towards him. She took him by the arm and with a big smile, lead him down the ward. He couldn't hear what she was saying, but suddenly he knew Annie was going to be alright.

### *Producing and Using Taped Exercises for Spelling Practice*

- Language used in the exercises should be familiar and relevant to the students.
- Sentences or phrases should be recorded clearly, but retain natural speed, rhythm and stress patterns.
- Where appropriate, spellings should be contextualised in a meaningful way, e.g. a dialogue or story rather than isolated and unconnected sentences.
- Timing between words, phrases and sentences should be long enough to enable the students to

carry out the relevant part of the exercise. The time to listen, understand, verbalise and choose the appropriate answer should not be underestimated.

- Instructions included on the tape should be explicit in order to enable the student to work independently of the tutor.
- Initially time should be spent ensuring that the student:
  - i) understands how to use the tape recorder with ease (on/off; pause; rewind; etc).
  - ii) is clear about the procedure for carrying out the exercise e.g. rewinding if necessary, checking, moving on, repeating.

## Developing reading skills

### Introduction

At all levels of student attainment tutors can help motivate students to read by:

- creating an environment in which a wide range of reading materials are readily available, including materials in students' mother tongue and in translation
- encouraging students to pursue areas of interest outside the classroom e.g. by using the library and other information sources
- demonstrating the importance of reading in the overall development of literacy and providing opportunities to practise and improve these skills (e.g. by integrating reading and writing activities).

### 1. Practical approaches to work with beginning readers

#### Language Experience Approach

This means exactly what it says — drawing on the experience and language of the student(s) to provide material which can be used as a vehicle for learning to read and write. It involves transcribing students' spoken language and is an approach which can be used with beginner readers, and at later levels with individuals or with groups. Almost any conversation or discussion can provide a starting point. This could be as simple as a sentence or two, giving personal information (e.g. name, address, family) or more detailed description of personal experiences, expressing points of view on particular issues, etc. Because the reading material is generated by the students themselves, the content is relevant to them and is expressed in language which is within their everyday range. From the outset, they begin to read words in context rather than isolation. One of the greatest difficulties for the tutor using this with non-native speakers is deciding how to transcribe students' spoken language. There are inevitable changes between what is said and what gets written down. The essential thing is to get as

close as possible to what the student actually says, and to then get the student involved in amending or adding to it. Rather than insisting on Standard English it is better to operate within a wider definition of 'acceptability' (see section on Language, page 50).

#### *Method — Language experience with beginner readers*

1. Out of a conversation with the student select a sentence or two to write down. Using a tape recorder helps. Make sure the writing is quite large and clear, with good spacing. Line-breaking is also useful.

**Dividing a sentence into units of meaning encourages the beginner reader to read in sense groups.**

2. Read out the sentence, following with your finger. Then ask the student to do the same. Encourage him to read smoothly and fluently rather than jerkily, "word by word". He should repeat this several times if necessary.

If there are difficulties with particular bits, talk about different ways of working them out (e.g. leaving words out and coming back to them; "guessing" from the context; using sounds as a clue, etc.).

3. When the student can read the sentence(s) fairly fluently, write it out again in exactly the same way and cut it up into phrases. Ask the student to match these to the original, reading as he does so.

4. The next step is to cut the phrases into individual words and re-build the sentence(s) by matching each word with the original text. The student then reads the whole piece again.

5. Read out individual words at random and ask the student to identify them by reading through the whole text. Get the student to look for any words he has worked on previously and choose other words to record in a personal 'word bank'.

6. Ask the student to re-read the sentence(s) at the end of this and in the following lesson.

### Possible extensions

Follow-up work could include:

- copying the sentence for handwriting practice
- practising new spellings
- practising sentence construction (re-ordering words; making new sentences using some of the words used; providing new endings for some sentences, gap filling, etc.).

Language experience, as it is described here, is a method for working with beginner readers on an individual basis. However, some version of it remains useful beyond this level and can also be modified for use with groups of students, for example:

- for material derived from a shared experience — each student contributes a sentence
- one student acts as 'scribe' for another student or helps him to translate what he wants to record, having discussed it in their own language.

### Techniques for dealing with unfamiliar words

Students often worry about not being able to read and understand every word. For non-native speakers, there may be a double difficulty; they may be unable to decode a particular word, and even when they can do this, they may not know what it means. Even seemingly commonplace words may not be within their range of vocabulary (e.g. 'hen' and 'mop' though easy to decode are 'low frequency' words). From an early stage, it is important that they are aware that it is possible to understand the general meaning or 'gist' of what they are reading without necessarily understanding, or even reading every single word, and that it is often possible to work out words which are creating problems using *contextual clues*, *visual clues* and *sounds*.

### Cloze procedure

This activity shows that it is possible to 'guess' the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary using the words around it (i.e. through context cueing).

1. Using material which is interesting and appropriate for the student's stage of learning (e.g. student's writing; simple instructions), delete words at regular intervals (e.g. every fifth, seventh or ninth word). Remember that the more words that are deleted, the more difficult the exercise will be.

2. The student reads the text (with deletions) to get a general idea of the context, and then tries to provide appropriate words to fill in the gaps.

3. If a group of students are working from the same material, a number of different words might be suggested, all of which are equally appropriate. Though it is useful to have the original version available, it is also important to stress that there is not necessarily a 'right' answer.

4. Discuss what 'clues' were used to fill the gaps, and whether it was possible to 'predict' using what came before, or whether it was necessary to read on and 'guess' from what came after it.

### Using Phonics

'Sounding out' new words will be more difficult for the non-native speaker because of their unfamiliarity with aspects of the English sound system and possibly Roman script. Nevertheless, it is a strategy which should not be overlooked. The tutor needs to identify which sound/symbol correlations are unfamiliar to individual students, and introduce these systematically (see Nicholls and Naish, BBC Publications, 1981 and "ESL/Literacy", ALBSU 1985).

### Visual Recognition

Beginner readers need to build up the number of words which they can recognise 'on sight'. This is particularly important for second language students who may find it more difficult to use prediction, phonic knowledge, etc., because of differences between their own language and English.

### Social Sight Words

Students who have lived here for a number of years may be already familiar with many of these words, which appear on notices and signs in the street, at work, etc., and these can provide a basis for extending their reading vocabulary. Activities could include:

- looking for words within words,  
e.g.

(in) (form) ation

- finding familiar words, word families or 'patterns'  
e.g.

|            |             |             |
|------------|-------------|-------------|
| telephone  | danger      | information |
| television | dangerous   | station     |
| telegram   | dangerously | nation      |

### Key words

These are the small, commonly occurring words, sometimes called 'structure' words which make up a very large proportion of the language.

**The following 32 words make up about one-third of all the words we read and write:**

|      |     |      |     |
|------|-----|------|-----|
| a    | all | is   | it  |
| and  | are | not  | of  |
| as   | at  | on   | one |
| be   | but | said | so  |
| for  | had | that | the |
| have | he  | they | to  |
| him  | his | was  | we  |
| I    | in  | with | you |

**Along with these words, one hundred altogether, they make up about half of all the words we read and write:**

|        |       |       |       |
|--------|-------|-------|-------|
| about  | an    | no    | now   |
| back   | been  | my    | new   |
| before | big   | off   | old   |
| by     | call  | only  | or    |
| came   | can   | other | our   |
| come   | could | out   | over  |
| did    | do    | right | see   |
| down   | first | she   | some  |
| from   | get   | their | them  |
| go     | has   | then  | there |
| her    | here  | this  | two   |
| if     | into  | up    | want  |
| just   | like  | well  | went  |
| little | look  | were  | what  |
| made   | make  | when  | where |
| me     | more  | which | who   |
| much   | must  | will  | your  |

(McNally and Murray, 1985)

By building up a 'bank' of these words and being able to recognise them 'on sight' the number of new words in any reading material will be considerably reduced. Visual recognition is particularly useful here, as many are difficult to 'guess' from context and to 'sound' out. In addition they are often not used by students in their spoken English.

Students can build up their own personal 'bank' of words and practise them in the following ways:

- Record and store key words which they learn through Language Experience, revising them occasionally through 'Look and Say'.
- If the words are stored on individual cards, they can provide the basis for 'matching' games (e.g. pelmanism, snap).

- In a mixed group, the beginner reader can be given the same text as other students (e.g. a newspaper article) and use it to identify some of the key words from their personal 'Bank' (e.g. by highlighting, underlining).

## Materials

Using the tape recorder for language experience

### Transcription : Ruby's story

**T:** And it was about that umbrella that we wanted to hear.

**R:** Yes. Well all right. Joan, I will tell you a story what happen to me. When I were living in Colehill Lane, one day I were going to work, and my daughter said to me, 'Mother, take the umbrella with you, cause sometime you will need it.' And I took the umbrella. But she said, 'Mother, you must not open the umbrella when the sun is high, because the people, they will laugh at you over here, because they don't use it. Only, when it's raining, you must open it, but don't open it if the sun is high.' So I went to work and while coming from work, it was started to snow terrible.

**T:** Had you ever seen snow before?

**R:** I never see snow before at all. That is the first time. And I see this snow. And it started to snow, and I see no-one didn't open their umbrella, and that is the first time. And I had my umbrella in my bag, and I never open this umbrella at all, in my bag. It was there and — and the snow it start to fell on me, fell on me all the time and I get soakin wet, all my hair and everything. And when I went home, and when my daughter saw me she nearly faint. She say, 'Oh good gracious mother.' I say, 'Now don't you said nothing to me because you the one told me not to open the umbrella. You said only if it's raining, and I didn't see rain, I only see this thing falling on me all the time. And then, I didn't want to open the umbrella because I see nobody open the umbrella and I didn't open mine.' She said, 'Good gracious mother, look at your condition now. You can get sick.' I said, 'Well you are the cause of it. You will make I get sick.'

This is the transcript of a conversation in which a student was telling her tutor about the first time she saw snow in England. An extract was written out

for the student to read, and slight differences between what the student said and what was written were discussed. The text was reproduced on cards for matching and re-ordering. At a later date the same material was used as the basis for a cloze exercise.

I will tell you a story

of what happened to me

when I was living

in Colehill Lane

one day I was going to work

and my daughter said to me

"Mother take the umbrella with you  
because sometime you will need it

### Additional activities

As well as providing material for the individual student, a taped conversation such as this can provide the basis for a range of different activities for other students. Below are some suggestions for exploiting this particular taped conversation more fully:

- **Practice in listening:** Students answer questions (true/false; multiple choice; who? what? where? etc.), draw a simple sequence of pictures or simply explain what they heard.
- **Basis for discussion and students' own writing:** Related themes include first impressions of England, contrasting customs and habits; advice which 'misfired'.
- **Practice of specific language skills:** Could provide the basis for practice in past tenses, direct and reported speech, conditional sentences, word order, cause and effect, discourse organisation.

## 2. Methods to develop reading skills

### Introduction

"Once one passes beyond the beginning reading level, the learner should become increasingly independent and the teacher more of a resource ... The crucial thing for the 'not bad' reader is reading experience."

(Kohl, 1974, page 62)

Motivation is one of the most crucial factors in becoming an effective and independent reader. While some ESL students may be keen to improve their reading skills (e.g. for work, to help their children, for interest, pleasure, etc.) there are many who feel that they read well enough to 'get by' in most everyday situations. Though they read slowly and with difficulty, they often express a greater urgency about improving their writing and this may seem a much more tangible area to work on. It is important for the tutor to recognise, however, that for second language speakers, the difficulties inherent in reading texts written in English are often very demotivating, and this factor may also contribute to the student's reluctance to read. It is equally important to be aware of the role reading can play in developing writing skills. Exposure to a wide range of reading materials provides a basis for students to become more aware of different written forms, to extend their knowledge of language, to compare and evaluate different styles of writing, etc. This in turn helps them to develop their own individual style of writing, appropriate to different contexts.

### Selecting texts

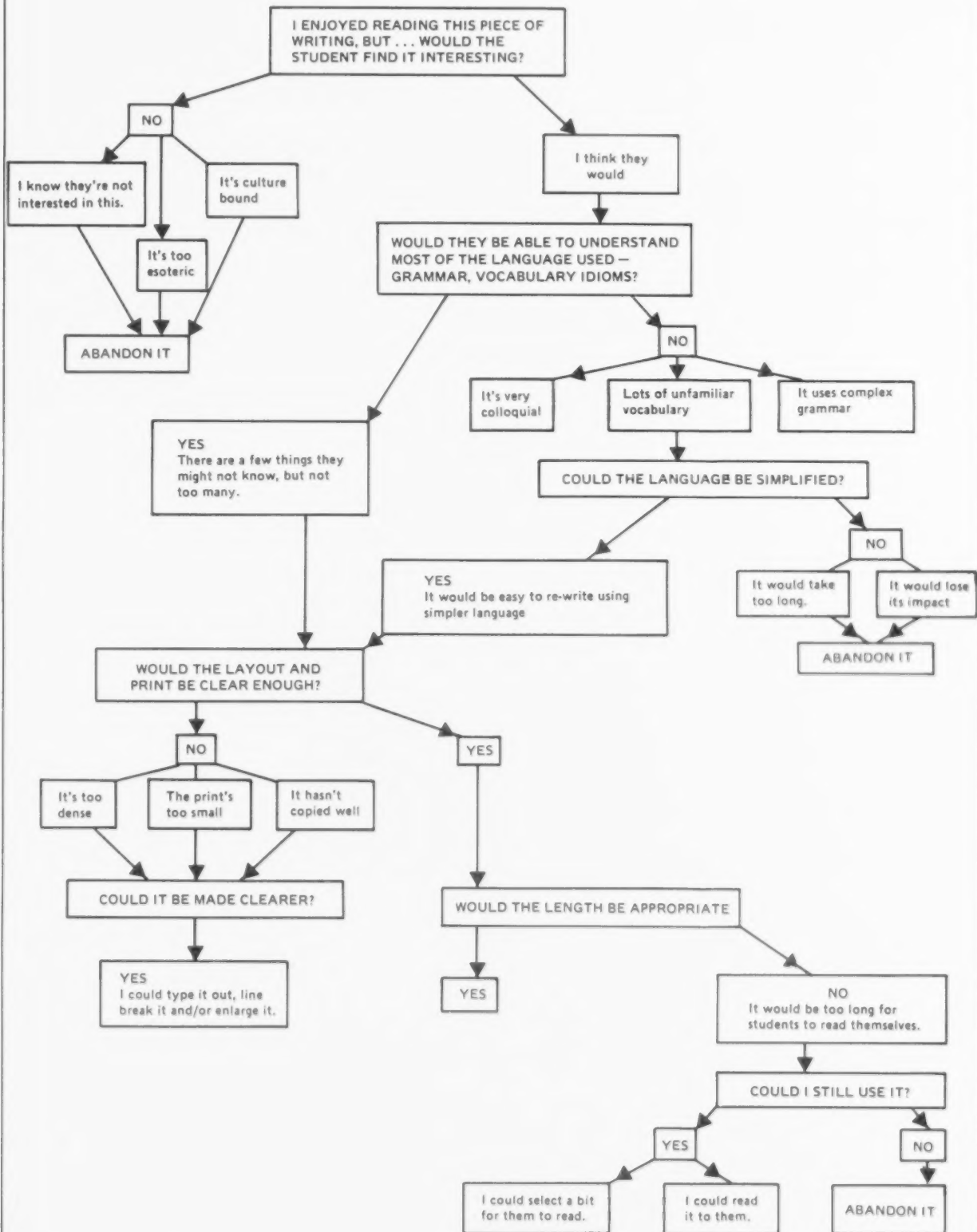
A wide range of texts needs to be available for students to work from. These could include commercially produced materials, scheme publications, tutors' and students' own writing and authentic materials, e.g. newspapers, magazines, maps, timetables, charts, instruction manuals, information leaflets, short stories, etc.

When selecting from among these materials the tutor needs to think carefully about the make-up of the group and the stage of learning, needs and interests of individuals within it. The following points should be considered.

### Content

As with any teaching material, this needs to be relevant to students in terms of their experiences and interests. When working with second language students it is particularly important to be aware of their cultural background. While this may contribute to gaps in the student's knowledge

# SELECTING TEXTS



of British culture and institutions, it also provides a wide range of different experiences upon which to draw. In selecting materials, the tutor needs to be sensitive to their cultural bias and ensure that the range introduced reflects the multi-cultural nature of the group. This is true for any group, but may be easily overlooked where only one or two ESL students are present in an adult literacy class made up predominantly of native speakers.

### Language used

Texts written in language which is unfamiliar to the students will make it equally inaccessible. Tutors need to consider the complexity of and students' familiarity with *grammatical structures*, *vocabulary* and *idiom*. This will depend on the students' stage of learning, and how and where they have learnt English.

- Students who have picked up the language by living and working in England will be much more familiar with colloquial forms. Those who have had less exposure to colloquial English can often decode these items of language, as they may be phonically quite simple, e.g. 'push off', 'belt up', but they may not know what they mean.
- Grammatical items which appear to be quite simple often carry complex meanings, e.g. The sentence 'I *didn't* mean to knock him down, but he stepped out right in front of me,' doesn't necessarily tell the non-native speaker that someone was knocked down. In this particular structure, this fact is implied rather than stated.

Though there is a need to extend students' language, too many unfamiliar items make the text inaccessible to some students and results in them being 'overloaded' with new language items at the expense of developing reading skills. While some unfamiliar language items may be left as specific teaching points, the tutor needs to be sensitive to the amount of new language a student can effectively learn, and to balance this with the need to develop confidence and fluency in reading. In a group of mixed ability it may be appropriate to present a simplified version of the text alongside the original so that those students with more limited language are not excluded.

### Length

Students should be encouraged to read at length, e.g. using readers at home, in independent study sessions, etc. However, when working with a group, there may be times when the length of a text seems inappropriate in terms of the student's concentration span and tutor's aims. In these circumstances the tutor may decide to select a short section for students to read and then read the remainder herself with students following.

### Exploiting texts

Although there is a core of skills common to any reading activity, different materials will demand additional and differing skills. Compare, for example, the way in which we read an instruction manual, small ads, a novel, a bus timetable. Before introducing any text to the student it is essential that the tutor is able to analyse the skills used by the fluent reader in approaching that particular text. In this way she is able to identify areas of difficulty if they arise and also use the material as a vehicle for introducing and practising a range of different skills. The way in which texts are exploited will depend on the nature of the material and the student's stage of learning. Below is a brief outline of different ways of focusing on specific skills.

### Access skills

Developing effective access skills involves learning about potential sources of information (places, organisations, texts) and having the confidence to use them. When working with students, 'problems' requiring some kind of research often arise spontaneously, either because they are of current concern to an individual or are triggered by discussion, project work, or other group activity e.g. Is this second hand washing machine a bargain? What are my rights in relation to council house repairs? Which is the cheapest way to get to Leeds? How do you prune roses? 'Problems' such as these offer genuine opportunities for individual students or the group to explore various sources of information.

### Survey and anticipation

By looking at the overall context of a particular text and surveying non-textual information (e.g. pictures, graphs, headlines, lay-out, position, titles, index/content pages) the reader begins to anticipate the content of the material and decide whether or not it is likely to be appropriate. For this reason it is important that material used with students should not be completely removed from its immediate context. For example, if retyping a newspaper article to make it more accessible, it is useful to retain pictures and headlines and to have a copy of the original newspaper available. Discussing the non-textual information encourages students to think about what they are going to read, why and what they already know about the subject. This in turn makes the text easier to understand. A range of different pre-reading activities can be devised which will aid this process.

- Before reading instructions or information about specific procedures (e.g. recipes, procedure for council repairs, what to do at the scene of an

accident, etc.) students can talk about or note down what they already know on the subject.

- The students can note down a series of questions which they hope will be answered by reading the text.
- The group may 'pool' information beforehand and then read with a view to verifying this and filling any gaps in their knowledge.

Having discussed and anticipated the content of the text it will be easier to read and the questions which remain provide a very specific purpose for reading.

### ***Skimming, scanning and reading 'in depth'***

The way a 'fluent' reader approaches a particular text will depend on their purpose in reading, the nature of the material and their knowledge of the subject.

1. They may scan the text, perhaps ignoring 95% and focusing on a very specific part which they read 'in depth'.
2. They may glance or skim through the text to get a very general idea of what it is about.
3. They may read the whole text 'in depth'.

While some texts are almost always read in a particular way (e.g. scanning a telephone directory), in many instances, the reader adjusts the way in which they read to suit the nature of the material and their purpose in reading. The latter may change, e.g. a recipe may be skimmed through to get an overall idea, then scanned to check availability of ingredients, timing, etc., and finally read 'in depth' to check the procedure.

Second language students who are literate in their own language will have already developed these skills. However, they may need to become more familiar with the layout and overall organisation of texts written in English in order to transfer them effectively to English.

Activities for practising *scanning* include basic matching exercises, e.g. locating words, numbers, dates in a text and quizzes based on newspapers, information booklets, dictionaries, etc.

*Skimming* activities include matching articles/opening paragraphs to headlines, reading for main points, etc. As both skimming and scanning involve faster reading, time limits may be useful in encouraging students to speed things up.

Activities for practising *reading 'in depth'* — see Comprehension below.

### ***Strategies for dealing with unfamiliar words and phrases***

Students often get 'blocked' when reading because they don't understand particular words or phrases. They don't always recognise that it is

possible to get the gist of the text without reading and understanding every word. This is true for both first and second language students, though obviously for the latter there is likely to be a much higher ratio of unfamiliar language. For this reason it is important to get students to use different strategies for dealing with these difficulties. These include:

- learning to recognise those words which are not central to their understanding of the passage as a whole, and to ignore these. Activities could include using Tippex to blank out all but key words, or high-lights to emphasise these
- using the context in which unfamiliar words occur to 'guess' at the meaning (i.e. context cueing). Cloze exercises provide practice in this (see 'Working with Beginner Readers and Writers section, page 38).
- learning to identify words which they are unable to work out from the context but which are central to their understanding of the text and referring to other sources of information (e.g. dictionary, grammar book, other people).

### ***Comprehension***

In order to develop interpretive reading skills, students need to be encouraged to look beyond the literal meaning embodied in the words of the text. Comprehension involves much more than the ability to recognise and recall information or ideas which are explicitly stated. It involves being able to respond to the text on a number of different levels — reading between the lines, differentiating between fact and opinion, drawing on personal experience and intuition in order to hypothesise, evaluate, criticise and respond to what is read. 'Comprehension' activities should therefore help students to recognise and respond to these different levels of meaning. *Discussion and task based activities* e.g. carrying out instructions, transferring information from text to table/graph/map, following directions, etc. may often be more appropriate than set questions in demonstrating how much has been understood. If *questions* are used they should be devised carefully so as to reflect the different levels of comprehension outlined above. This applies to all types of 'questions' whether of the multiple choice, true or false statements type or the more commonly used direct questions ('What . . . ?' 'Did he . . . ?' 'Do you think . . . ?' etc.). Also, too many questions can destroy comprehension altogether, especially if the student does not really understand their point.

### ***Using Reference Skills***

Consulting reference books involves a wide range of skills, from simple recognition of alphabetical

order to more sophisticated survey and comprehension skills. Used with a group they can provide the basis for students with different levels of literacy to practise skills appropriate to their stage of learning. To use these books effectively, the students need to be genuinely interested in the subject. They also need to clearly identify the specific information they are looking for before turning to the range of books available.

### Questionnaire on World Religions

The aims of this activity were to encourage students to draw on their knowledge of their own and other religions, to share this with other members of the group and to identify specific information they wanted to find in the reference books provided. The range included books used in primary and secondary schools as well as those written for adults.

| WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT OTHER RELIGIONS ? |                                           |                                |                           |                                 |                     |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|
|                                          | List some countries where it is practised | Is there more than one branch? | How old is this religion? | Who was their greatest teacher? | Where did it start? |
| CHRISTIANITY                             |                                           |                                |                           |                                 |                     |
| MOSLEM                                   |                                           |                                |                           |                                 |                     |
| HINDUISM                                 |                                           |                                |                           |                                 |                     |
| JUDAISM                                  |                                           |                                |                           |                                 |                     |
| BUDDHISM                                 |                                           |                                |                           |                                 |                     |
| SIKH                                     |                                           |                                |                           |                                 |                     |

|              | Is there a special holy book? | Are there any food taboos? | Name a special festival. | Do they have a holy place? | Is there anything else you would like to know? |
|--------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| CHRISTIANITY |                               |                            |                          |                            |                                                |
| MOSLEM       |                               |                            |                          |                            |                                                |
| HINDUISM     |                               |                            |                          |                            |                                                |
| JUDAISM      |                               |                            |                          |                            |                                                |
| BUDDHISM     |                               |                            |                          |                            |                                                |
| SIKH         |                               |                            |                          |                            |                                                |

### Procedure

1. Students, individually, filled in as much of the grid as they could using ink for things they were sure about and pencil for those they were not sure about.

2. The group discussed what they had written and pooled information. They then decided which questions were still outstanding.

3. Students turned to the reference books provided to try and answer these questions or, if this was too difficult to practise related literacy skills.

The activity can be extended in a number of different ways depending on the interest generated and the skills individual students need to practise. It could include:

- ☐ discussion and writing on a specific area, e.g. weddings, funerals, etc.
- ☐ preparing a short talk on an aspect of their own religion

☐ a short written summary of their religion

☐ comparing and contrasting two branches within their own religion, etc.

In using reference books some students may be able to work independently. Others, though they might have used reference skills in their first language, will need time and possibly some help in familiarising themselves with the layout and organisation of information in English source books. Some students will have had a more limited experience and will need support in learning how to develop and use reference skills (i.e. using the cover, contents, and index pages; identifying different sections, using headings and sub-headings; scan reading, etc.), while there may be others who need to concentrate on the more basic literacy skills, e.g. alphabetical order, word recognition, phonic skills. This activity provides the context for students to practise skills at a range of different levels using a common source of material.

## A newspaper article: 'Bargain twin tub is home again'

Before seeing the text, students were shown the headline and given key words taken from the article. They explained what they thought the story was about, and then read it, comparing their version with the original. Follow up work included an exploration of some of the more colloquial language used in the text.

### Bargain twin tub is home again

1. EVERYTHING came out in the wash yesterday for the luckless husband who sold his wife's twin tub by mistake. 5.

The couple who paid £35 for Mrs Reid's £200 washing machine came clean—and returned it.

10. As the washday blues were lifted from unhappy husband Isaac, his wife at last saw the funny side.

15. "It was all a genuine mistake," said Mrs Reid, settling about the family wash.

20. The trouble started when Mrs Reid was out shopping. A couple called and told Isaac they had come in response to an advert.

25. Mr Reid, a machine operator who leaves all household matters to his wife, thought she had forgotten to tell him it was up for sale.

30. He took the money and even helped the couple carry the washer to the car.

35. But later he discovered that the couple had called by mistake at the Reids' home in Bestwood Park, Nottingham—instead of a house with the same number just around the corner.

40. Mrs Reid, mother of four teenagers, said: "I can laugh about it now, but at the time I was ready to kill Isaac."

45. "It was a genuine mistake. The couple were very honest and brought it straight back when they realised the mix-up."

50. The identity of the couple remains a mystery. "They did mention their name," Mrs Reid said. But now she has clean forgotten it.

### Reading the Newspapers

These words were taken from a newspaper article. Use them to make up your version of the story.



Think of who? what? why? how?

A Choose the definition you think is the right one for each of these expressions:

- |                                   |                                    |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Came out in the wash (line 1.) | a) is still unknown                |
| 2. came clean (1.8)               | b) confusion                       |
| 3. settling about (1.15)          | c) became known                    |
| 4. come in response to (1.20)     | d) did not remember at all         |
| 5. household matters (1.23)       | e) behaved in an honest way        |
| 6. mix-up (1.45)                  | f) everything to do with the house |
| 7. remains a mystery (1.47)       | g) beginning to do                 |
| 8. clean forgotten (1.50)         |                                    |

B find a synonym for the following:

- |             |       |
|-------------|-------|
| 1. luckless | _____ |
| 2. return   | _____ |
| 3. unhappy  | _____ |
| 4. response | _____ |

C find an opposite for each of the following:

- |               |       |
|---------------|-------|
| 1. by mistake | _____ |
| 2. honest     | _____ |

## A short story for reading comprehension

This material was available for students to use during individual study sessions. The exercises were intended to be self checking.

### READING COMPREHENSION

1. You are going to read a story called "Falling Stars". Write what you think it is going to be about.
2. Now look at the story on page 2. Was your answer to question 1 right?  
YES ☐ NO ☐
3. Now turn to page 3. Do not read the story again. Check your answers against the answers on page 4.
4. Now turn to page 5 and answer the questions. If you wish, read the story again before you answer these questions.

### FALLING STARS

*A. Hainstock*

It was just after midnight on a beautiful starlit night. The country had settled down to its slumber. Everything was calm and still except for the rustle of the leaves in the hedgerows and the howling of a dog or fox, far away in the distance.

I was on my way home from a dance and had just parted with my friend at the end of the long lane which led to my house.

In those far off days I was frightened of neither man nor beast but I had one phobia. I was terrified of falling stars. Country people are rather superstitious, and my grandmother used to tell me that when a star fell it meant that someone, somewhere, had just died. The falling star was the soul departing from the body and if I ever saw one I should say a prayer to help it on its way to heaven.

I was happily walking along, humming the last dance tune when suddenly the sky was lit by a brilliance the like of which I'd never seen before. On looking up I saw a star plummeting earthwards with a huge trail of flame like a piece of lighted paper. I was so frightened I not only said a prayer but, trembling like a leaf, I sat down on the grass verge, got out my rosary beads and said ten 'Hail Marys' for the departing soul!

As I sat there in a state of complete shock, an elderly woman by the name of Annie Vixey came along. I had known her all my life and it was nothing strange to meet her at any time of the day or night, as she lived alone and used to visit all around the area. Never in my life had I been more pleased to see another human being. I asked her if she'd seen the falling star and she said that she had not as she had only just left the house next to mine. Seeing the state I was in she tried to console me by saying I should not be afraid as it was only a soul departing this earth for a better place.

I looked at the watch that I had been given for my sixteenth birthday and saw that it was twenty minutes after midnight, so I told Annie that I must go as my father wouldn't take kindly to the excuse of a falling star for my being so late. I slept fitfully that night.

The next day I suffered a still greater shock when I heard that Annie Vixey had not left her house the night before as she was entertaining an old friend whom she had not seen for many years, and who had come to spend a few days with her. They were sitting by the fireside reliving old memories when Annie had collapsed and died. The time of fifteen minutes past midnight.

Although many years have passed since this eerie incident happened to me, and I know that for many people starlit nights are associated with love and romance, I still prefer a cloudy night when not a star is visible in the heavens.

1. The story happens:
 

|                  |
|------------------|
| in the morning   |
| in the night     |
| in the afternoon |
2. The writer was on her way home from
 

|                  |
|------------------|
| the cinema       |
| a friend's house |
| a dance          |
3. The writer was terrified of
 

|               |
|---------------|
| wild animals  |
| men           |
| falling stars |
4. When a star fell it meant someone
 

|                 |
|-----------------|
| had been born   |
| had just died   |
| had got married |
5. The writer suddenly saw a
 

|              |
|--------------|
| ghost        |
| falling star |
6. She started
 

|          |
|----------|
| to pray  |
| to cry   |
| to shout |
7. It was
 

|         |
|---------|
| strange |
| normal  |

 for the writer to meet Annie Vixey in the night
8. The writer had been given
 

|            |
|------------|
| a watch    |
| a necklace |
| a bag      |

 for her sixteenth birthday
9. The old lady died sitting
 

|                 |
|-----------------|
| at the table    |
| by the fireside |
| in bed          |
10. The writer prefers
 

|           |
|-----------|
| a rainy   |
| a cloudy  |
| a starlit |

 night

1. The story happens:
 

|                  |
|------------------|
| in the morning   |
| in the night     |
| in the afternoon |
2. The writer was on her way home from
 

|                  |
|------------------|
| the cinema       |
| a friend's house |
| a dance          |
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|               |
|---------------|
| wild animals  |
| men           |
| falling stars |
4. When a star fell it meant someone
 

|                 |
|-----------------|
| had been born   |
| had just died   |
| had got married |
5. The writer suddenly saw a
 

|              |
|--------------|
| ghost        |
| falling star |
6. She started
 

|          |
|----------|
| to pray  |
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|         |
|---------|
| strange |
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|            |
|------------|
| a watch    |
| a necklace |
| a bag      |

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|                 |
|-----------------|
| at the table    |
| by the fireside |
| in bed          |
10. The writer prefers
 

|           |
|-----------|
| a rainy   |
| a cloudy  |
| a starlit |

 night

**STORY: Falling Stars**

**READING COMPREHENSION**

1. First read the story without stopping at words you don't understand.
2. Now answer these questions in writing:
  1. What time of day does the story take place?
  2. Where was the writer coming from?
  3. What was the writer frightened of?
  4. What was the grandmother's explanation for falling stars?
  5. Why did the writer suddenly sit down on the grass trembling?
  6. Why was the writer not surprised to meet Annie Vixey?
  7. Did Annie Vixey live with anyone else?
  8. Why did the writer say s/he had to go home?
  9. What gave the writer a shock the next day?
  10. What kind of night does the writer prefer?  
Why?

For answers PTO

**ANSWER SHEET**

1. midnight
2. from a dance
3. a falling star
4. that someone had died
5. because s/he saw a falling star and was frightened
6. because it was not strange to meet her at any time of day or night. She lived alone and often visited the area.
7. No, she lived alone.
8. because his father would be angry.
9. He heard that Annie Vixey had died at fifteen minutes past midnight. She had not left the house the night before.
10. a cloudy night, because the stars are invisible.

1. Now read the story again
2. Tell the story to a tutor — or say it onto a tape and listen to how you tell it. Then ask someone else to listen. Is it clear?
3. Has anything like this ever happened to you? Write about it.
4. If not write your own version of what happened that bright starry night.

## Developing language

### Language in the context of literacy

Many non-native speakers of English can communicate fluently and effectively despite differences between the language they use and the various forms of spoken English used by native speakers. 'Inaccuracies' such as the misuse of tenses, the omission of prepositions and articles, unorthodox word order, etc., will not necessarily impede communication. Meaning may be indicated as much by the linguistic and physical context, intonation and gesture as by grammatical 'markers'. However, these differences in spoken language often present difficulties for those fluent second language students who seek help with literacy. This is partly because of the differing nature of spoken and written communication. When writing, the person with whom you are communicating is not physically present. This separation in time and space means that it is impossible for the writer to identify and respond to any breakdown in communication. There is therefore a greater need for precision and clarity. Any 'inaccuracies' may create ambiguity. Also within a literate society, we have high expectations for accuracy in written language, and any deviations from accepted norms will influence the impression we form of the writer. This is obviously important in relation to more formal writing (e.g. letters of application, insurance claims, etc).

Generally, the difficulty for second language speakers is that, unless they speak very fluently, the language they use is a personal reworking of the generally accepted rules and structural organisation that govern 'conventional' English form and usage. Sometimes referred to as an 'interlanguage', it is an amalgam of such things as, direct translation from forms used in the students' first language, approximations of utterances and phrases learnt in context and attempts at generalisation of apparently understood rules of English. Unlike, for example, forms of English used by Afro-Caribbean groups, it is clearly not a form of English which has its own coherent internal structure; nor is it shared by any one group of people. It is therefore not within the range of any practical definition of an 'acceptable' variation of English, and unless the second language student speaks very fluently, it will be necessary for him to adapt parts of his spoken language when writing in order to communicate effectively. For some

students, particularly those who have learnt English more recently, focusing on the language necessary for improving literacy skills may have a spin-off in terms of their spoken English.

However, in a literacy class, the primary aim is not to get students to change the way they speak. Indeed, for many students any attempt to do so may undermine their confidence and be totally ineffective. This is particularly true for those who have been here for a number of years and whose individual speech patterns are deeply ingrained. In the context of the literacy class, the most important priority is helping students to communicate effectively through reading and writing. Any language work should be seen as going some way to achieving this.

There is an obvious contradiction between an approach which suggests that it may be necessary for students to adapt parts of their spoken language when writing and the one outlined in the sections on Developing Reading and Writing Skills. There the emphasis was on valuing and drawing on students existing language resources. However, the two approaches are not necessarily incompatible and second language students need the benefit of both.

Integrating them needs to be handled sensitively and it is essential that the tutor clearly establishes the aims of a particular activity with the students. For example, is the aim to increase accuracy, extend the range of expression, or develop confidence and fluency in writing?

### Developing language — aims

In talking about language development with ESL students, it is useful to define a number of broad aims. These are:

- developing in students *an increased awareness of the range, variety, registers, of 'accepted' forms of spoken and written English;*
- enabling them to *identify points at which personal variations in their own spoken English might impede communication when writing;*
- developing their *ability to use English unambiguously, fluently and in ways which will be within the range of 'acceptable' variations of written English.*

## Methods

Students' attitudes to language will vary according to their previous experience of learning. Those who have studied language(s) more formally whether their own, English or others, here or in their own country will already be familiar with different language forms and ways of analysing them, and this provides an invaluable aid to learning. There are others with no 'formal' experience of exploring language, but who nevertheless may welcome the opportunity to 'make sense' of English and the way it is put together. Methods adopted will obviously vary according to the students' experience and knowledge.

### Contrastive work

Differences between written and spoken language can be explored by comparing a taped conversation and a written text which are similar in content. For example, a dialogue in which a complaint is made about faulty goods contrasted with a similar letter of complaint; verbal instructions (e.g. DIY, recipes, directions) contrasted with a written version; a verbal message contrasted with a written one, and so on. Issues for discussion include differences in choice of language, the degree of clarity, the selection and ordering of information. Similarly, contrasting two or three different texts with similar content can help raise students' overall awareness of the different ways in which language is used. For example, articles on the same topic taken from different newspapers, letters on the same subject written from different points of view, etc., provide the opportunity to explore the differences in the writer's choice of language, style, register and so on.

### Tape transcripts

ESL tutors find that recording and transcribing students' spoken language is invaluable in helping to identify specific language needs for both themselves and the students. In the context of literacy, this activity is also useful in helping to identify the points at which inaccuracies in spoken English are impeding reading and writing. Initially, some students may feel inhibited about being recorded and the value of this will have to be clearly demonstrated. If the tape recorder is used regularly, it is then easy to select short sections of dialogues or discussions to be scripted. The group or individual students can analyse the tape scripts, deciding points at which errors create ambiguity. As students become more confident with the technique, they can work more independently, taping, scripting and analysing sections of language in pairs or small groups. Transcripts can

also be compared with samples of written work in order to demonstrate the influence spoken English has on their writing and to select areas which need working on.

### Students' writing

Students' own writing provides the most appropriate starting point for language work. This in turn demands a systematic approach to drafting, proof reading and redrafting (see *Developing Writing Skills* — correcting students work). In deciding which errors to work on, it is important to take into account the students' stage of learning and the nature of the error, e.g. whether it interferes with communication, whether it is a recurring difficulty, how easy it is to teach and/or learn, how transferable it is to other contexts, etc. It is also worth bearing in mind that, in the context of developing literacy, there may be a tendency for language work to become fragmented. Systematic record keeping, revision and review is therefore essential.

### Working on specific points of grammar

In teaching specific items of grammar and vocabulary, it is important that they are carefully contextualised to ensure that both the form and meaning are clear. Whenever possible, students should be encouraged to 'discover' the particular rule or pattern rather than being told this, and then to experiment with using it in other situations. This can be done by:

- outlining simple situations (relevant to the student and using familiar language) which demonstrate meaning through context;
- using blackboard drawings, real objects, pictures, etc., to contextualise language;

Techniques for demonstrating meaning and form will differ according to what is being taught. These could include:

- contrasting the way a particular structure is used in English and the students' own language;
- using colour coded cards to demonstrate how sentences are formed;
- introducing texts which provide the opportunity for new language to be examined in a written context.

When the student understands what the new item of language means and how it operates, he should be provided with the opportunity to reinforce and later revise it, e.g. through further contextualised examples and specially devised exercises, in their own written work.

While the need to work on some points of grammar may be common to several or all students in the group, and could be effectively

developed as a shared activity, it is also important to provide the time and space for students to work on specific areas individually. Time allocated to independent study or 'workshop' sessions can provide opportunities for this.

## The Role of Listening and Speaking

Many activities used by tutors to practise aural/oral skills are also relevant in terms of improving reading and writing.

**Discussion** is an obvious example and is central to methods used by tutors working with first language adult literacy students. Prior to writing, it provides the opportunity for students to formulate their ideas on a particular subject, and find the necessary language to express them. Prior to reading, a short discussion helps them to anticipate the content of a text in terms of both the subject matter and the language used.

**Role play and role simulation** are also central to the development of aural/oral skills, and they can often be overtly linked to the development of literacy. For example, reading a college prospectus or job description could be followed by filling in an application form or writing a letter of application and could lead to a role play of the interview; a role play complaining about faulty goods could be followed up by a letter of complaint. Practice in spoken and written skills are thus integrated and serve to reinforce each other.

**Listening activities** are also relevant in developing literacy. There are parallels between the processes of reading and listening which suggest that some skills are transferable (e.g. identifying key words, context cueing, listening for gist, interpretive skills). Cloze listening and discrimination exercises also help students to become more aware of phonics and syntax. Again these activities can be overtly linked to literacy tasks, e.g. telephone messages, note taking, cloze dictation. As these activities are based on the use of the tape recorder, they also have the advantage of providing opportunities for students to work independently.

The following materials demonstrate how some of the methods outlined above were applied and represent a more general approach to developing language.

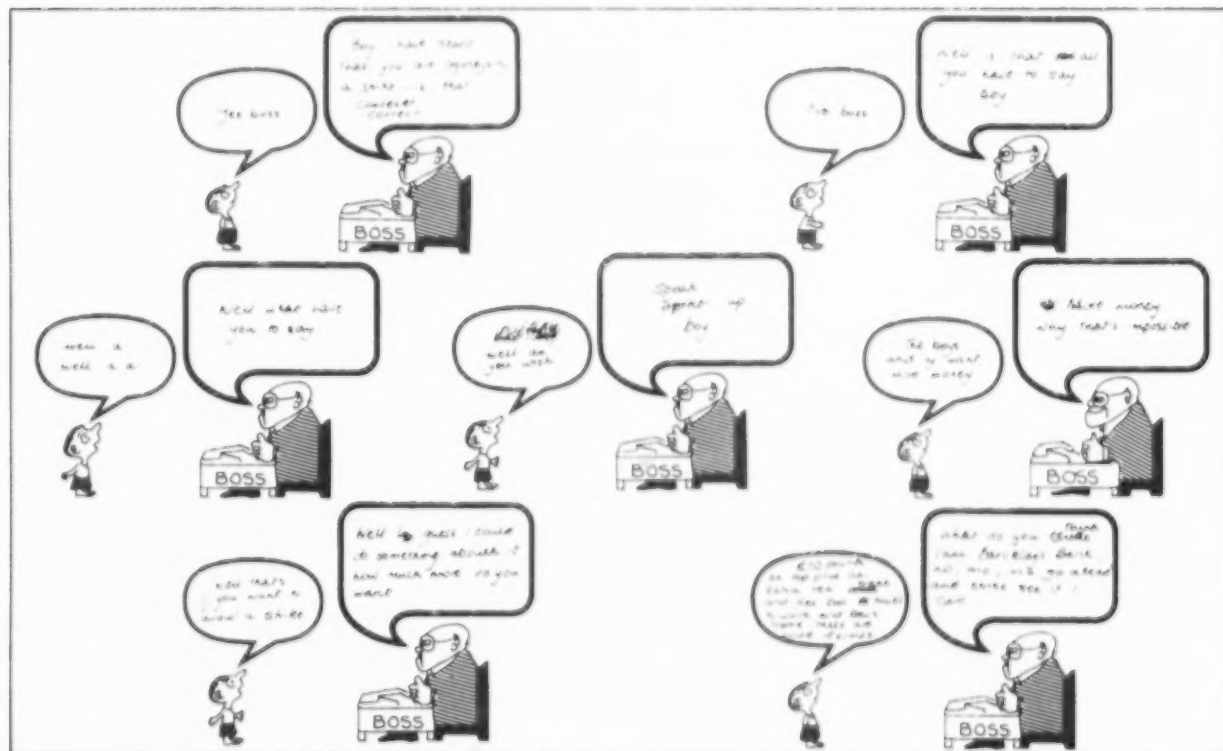
## Materials

### Using cartoons to practise writing direct and indirect speech

Cartoons can provide an interesting and often amusing stimulus for writing. They also provide a framework for practising the conventions of written dialogue (e.g. speech marks) and later for transferring direct to indirect or reported speech.

### Procedure

A number of cartoons were selected, any words



were erased with Tippex fluid or speech bubbles were drawn in. Students looked through the cartoons and selected one which inspired them. They were asked to think about the story line, and talk about this with each other if they wanted to. They then write the conversation into the bubbles and the cartoons were passed around for other students to read. After this they looked at a piece of written dialogue and focused on punctuation, layout, use of adverbs, etc. They then wrote out the conversation in the speech bubbles in dialogue form. In later lessons, students explored the conventions for transferring direct to indirect speech, i.e. changes in tense, pronouns, adverbs, punctuation, etc., and cartoons were used as a basis for practising this. In this case the conversation in the speech bubbles was written up in report form.

### Using the tape recorder to practise message taking

Taking telephone messages involves a complex range of communication and literacy skills. In this lesson, these were broken down into a series of stages.

1. Student were asked to listen to a tape on which there were a number of messages and, selecting from those written on the worksheet, indicate the ones which they heard (Worksheet A).

2. They then looked at written telephone messages and analysed the kind of information which it is necessary to include, e.g. time, date, who the message is from, key information, etc. After this they looked at written messages which were

### WRITING MESSAGES

#### A. Listen to the telephone conversations and tick the correct message

e.g. Mary phoned. She'll phone later ☒  
 Margaret phoned. Can you phone her later ☐  
 Mary phoned. Can you phone her later ☐

1. Mrs. Smith rang. Please phone her back ☐  
 Miss Smith rang. She'll phone later ☐  
 Mrs. Smith rang. She'll phone later. ☐

2. Joan telephoned. Please ring her back after six ☐  
 John telephoned. Please phone him back after six ☐  
 Mrs. Jones phoned. She'll phone back after six ☐

3. Mary phoned. She can't come this evening ☐  
 Mary rang. Her husband can't come today. ☐  
 Mary phoned. She can come this evening after seven. ☐

4. Sarah rang. What time should she come this evening ? ☐  
 Sarah rang. What time should she come tomorrow evening ? ☐  
 Sarah rang. She's not sure she can come this evening. ☐

5. Vanessa rang. She's got a cold and can't come to your party ☐  
 Vanessa rang. She's got a cold but she's coming to your party ☐  
 Vanessa rang. I've got a cold and can't come to her party. ☐

B. Look at this message :

The diagram shows a rectangular box containing a handwritten message. To the left of the box, an oval contains the text "Name of person message is for" with an arrow pointing to the name "Mr. Brown" at the top left of the message. To the right of the box, an oval contains the text "Time or date" with an arrow pointing to "5 p.m." at the top right. Below that, another oval contains the text "Name of person writing the message." with an arrow pointing to the signature "Mary" at the bottom right. The message inside the box reads: "Mr. Brown", "5 p.m.", "W. H. Smith rang. Your book is now in stock.", and "Mary".

What's wrong with these messages:

Susan  
Mrs. Green rang. Can you  
come to tea tomorrow  
John.

Mr. Brown 10.5.82  
Julie rang

Mrs. Brown Mon.  
Window cleaner says  
you owe him £2

incomplete and were asked to suggest how they could have been improved (Worksheet B).

3. Students practised listening to and writing down telephone numbers and names which were spelt out on tape (Worksheet C1).

4. The group discussed the kind of changes it is necessary to make when transferring a verbal message to written form.

e.g.

"Tell her *I* won't be able to meet *her*" —  
*She* won't be able to meet you.

They then listened to a series of short messages and transferred these to writing (Worksheet C2).

5. Students listened to fuller taped messages, and wrote them down. The complexity varied according to students' level of spoken English.

In order to make the situation more realistic, students role played with tutors or other students. Sitting back to back, one person gave the message and another wrote it down. This provided opportunities for the listener to interrupt, ask for clarification, check back, etc., just as they would in the real situation.

C 1. Listen to the numbers and write them down :

1. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

Listen to the names and write them down :

1. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

C 2 Write down the message you hear on the tape. Remember you might have to change some of the phrases you hear.

e.g. For 'I'll ring her back' you have to write 'She'll ring you back'

---

---

---

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---

---

---

---

## Using picture sequences to practise language

Picture sequences provide a useful framework for reinforcing and revising specific areas of language, particularly at earlier stages of learning when the student needs to be offered more support. They are especially useful with mixed level groups as they can be used in a variety of ways, the degree of support reflecting the students' stage of learning. This sequence was used as a basis for practising the language used in written narrative, e.g. past tenses (simple past, past continuous, past perfect), time markers (first of all, then, after that, etc.), link words (and, so, because, etc.).

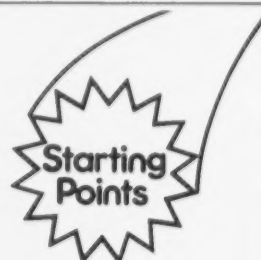
### *It has been used in the following ways:*

Students listened to a taped conversation in which one of the speakers described what had happened. They looked at the individual pictures which were cut up and presented separately and sequenced these. They then matched written

captions to each picture and read them out. Finally they copied out the captions, using simple link words.

### *Variations*

- No captions were used. Students reproduced the story orally and wrote it out, using the pictures as prompts.
- A number of different captions were provided for each picture. Students selected those they thought were the most appropriate.
- Students wrote their own captions on cards.
- Students were presented with the cut up pictures, sequenced these and provided their own story line.
- Students discussed and wrote about their own experiences.
- Students discussed the story line. They were given the written narrative with verbs omitted (i.e. gap filling exercise).



## Theft at Work





## Integrating literacy with listening and role play — training interview.

Most of the students in this group were interested in or had already applied for some type of training course. In previous lessons they had used the

booklet 'Train for a Better Job with TOPS'. In this lesson they listened to the tape of a training interview and did a number of listening exercises (e.g. identifying questions asked, matching questions and answers, evaluating the appropriacy of the candidates' answers,

Manpower Services Commission

### TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete this form  
It will help us to advise you on the  
course of training most suitable for you

*SPECIMEN*

FOR OFFICIAL USE

Date of enquiry .....

Date of main TOPS interview .....

Time .....

Office .....

Surname .....

First names .....

Date of birth .....

Address .....

Tel. Nos. Home .....

.....

Work .....

.....

#### 1 PREVIOUS TOPS TRAINING

Delete inappropriate word

Have you applied for or received TOPS training before?

YES NO

If YES, give details (including the dates of the course)

.....

#### 2 EDUCATION

What year did your full time education end? ..... How old were you? .....

What certificates (eg CSE) did you obtain at school? .....

Give details of any further studies .....

and certificates/qualifications gained .....

#### 3 OCCUPATIONAL GUIDANCE AND EMPLOYMENT REHABILITATION

Have you ever been interviewed at an occupation guidance unit?

YES NO

If YES, please give the name of the unit and the date of interview .....

Date / /

Have you attended a course at an employment rehabilitation centre?

YES NO

If YES, please give the name of the centre and the dates of the course .....

#### 4 WORK EXPERIENCE

Give details of the jobs you have held in the last 5 years starting with your last job;  
please account for any extended gaps eg sickness

| EMPLOYER'S NAME AND TYPE OF BUSINESS | POSITION AND DUTIES | DATES |    |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|-------|----|
|                                      |                     | FROM  | TO |
|                                      |                     |       |    |
|                                      |                     |       |    |
|                                      |                     |       |    |
|                                      |                     |       |    |
|                                      |                     |       |    |
|                                      |                     |       |    |
|                                      |                     |       |    |
|                                      |                     |       |    |
|                                      |                     |       |    |

Give details of any other experience which may be useful, eg in the forces, overleaf.

identifying any breakdown in communication, etc.). They then read through the Training Opportunities Questionnaire, identified any difficult vocabulary, and discussed how they would complete the form. Most felt that Section 7 of the form would be the most difficult. They worked

through an exercise based on this section, focusing particularly on the selection of appropriate information, sequencing and linking. Students then completed the questionnaire for themselves and this was used as the basis for role play in the following lesson.

#### 4 (Continued) Details of other experience:-

.....

.....

.....

.....

#### 5 OTHER TRAINING

Delete inappropriate word

Have you served an apprenticeship or part of one?

|     |    |
|-----|----|
| YES | NO |
|-----|----|

If YES, in which trade .....

and for how long? .....

#### 6 HEALTH

Do you suffer from or have you ever suffered from the following?

|               |                                                            |     |    |                  |                                                            |     |    |                           |                                                            |     |    |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| Skin diseases | <table border="1"><tr><td>YES</td><td>NO</td></tr></table> | YES | NO | Chest complaints | <table border="1"><tr><td>YES</td><td>NO</td></tr></table> | YES | NO | Stomach complaints        | <table border="1"><tr><td>YES</td><td>NO</td></tr></table> | YES | NO |
| YES           | NO                                                         |     |    |                  |                                                            |     |    |                           |                                                            |     |    |
| YES           | NO                                                         |     |    |                  |                                                            |     |    |                           |                                                            |     |    |
| YES           | NO                                                         |     |    |                  |                                                            |     |    |                           |                                                            |     |    |
| Poor hearing  | <table border="1"><tr><td>YES</td><td>NO</td></tr></table> | YES | NO | Poor eyesight    | <table border="1"><tr><td>YES</td><td>NO</td></tr></table> | YES | NO | Blackouts or dizzy spells | <table border="1"><tr><td>YES</td><td>NO</td></tr></table> | YES | NO |
| YES           | NO                                                         |     |    |                  |                                                            |     |    |                           |                                                            |     |    |
| YES           | NO                                                         |     |    |                  |                                                            |     |    |                           |                                                            |     |    |
| YES           | NO                                                         |     |    |                  |                                                            |     |    |                           |                                                            |     |    |

Any others - please give details .....

.....

#### 7 THE FUTURE

Why are you interested in training at this time? .....

.....

.....

Have you a specific training course in mind?

|     |    |
|-----|----|
| YES | NO |
|-----|----|

If YES, which? .....

Why are you interested in this course? .....

.....

.....

.....

.....

#### 8 COUNTRY OF BIRTH

In which country were you born? .....

If you were born overseas, when did you arrive in this country? .....

.....

.....

Signature .....

Date .....

Thank you for completing this questionnaire

Dd 8008937 548 5M 8/79 H·P Ltd Bly

Students listened to a tape of the prospective trainee being interviewed. Then they worked on Section 7 of the form as follows:

## 7. THE FUTURE

Why are you interested in training at this time?

Look at the information below. Decide what Ali wrote on the form. Put a tick ( ✓ ) in column 1

| 1                        |                                                | 2                        |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I am fed up with working in garages.           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I would like to re-train.                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | You can't earn much money in a garage.         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | My previous qualifications aren't good enough. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I have tried to get work in a garage.          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | There are very few jobs at the moment.         | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Now decide the order in which he wrote the information (put numbers in column 2) and how he joined the sentences (and, but, so)

Why are you interested in this course?

| 1                        |                                                   | 2                        |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I could make a lot of money.                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I am interested in training to be an electrician. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I want to do this particular course.              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I'm fed up with not working.                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I would get a good qualification.                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I would have the opportunity to work for myself.  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | My friend told me it was easy.                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I would be in a better position to get a job.     | <input type="checkbox"/> |

(Join using because, and)

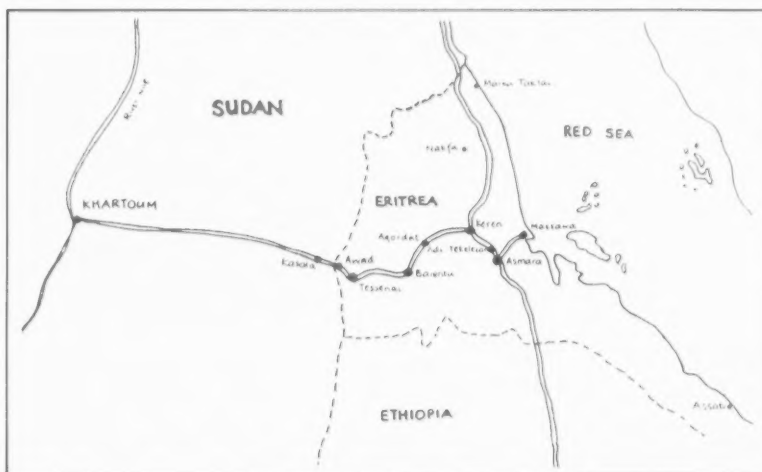
## An example of text based exercises — Students' writing

This text was used to introduce and develop work on past tenses, pronouns, linking (. . . and so . . .), line markers, narrative sequencing, gerunds (after . . . ing).

### How I left my country

In the Autumn of 1977, the political situation got worse. On January 3rd, the Ethiopian soldiers arrested one of the members of our 'wahyo'\* and so I decided to leave. There was a water shortage in Asmara at that time, so my friend and I dressed in peasant clothes and went into the country. We were carrying buckets and when the Ethiopian soldiers stopped us, we told them we were going to fetch water. When we got past them, we kept on walking. We felt very frightened. After walking for about 30kms we got to Adi-Tekelezane in an area controlled by the E.P.L.F.†. We then got a lift in an E.P.L.F. lorry. The Ethiopians were dropping bombs along the main roads so we had to travel by night. After three hours we arrived in Keren. At that time it was under the E.P.L.F. We spent one week there looking for a way to hire a camel. We managed to make contact with a camel owner and we arranged to meet him at night, outside Keren. We left the town after it got dark and went to the meeting place. But this time there were five of us travelling together. We travelled on two camels towards the border. Again we went by night and rested under the trees during the day. After eight days we got to Awad, a town near the border. We spent the night there and in the morning we caught a bus and crossed over the border into the Sudan. After about an hour, we arrived in Kasala. When we got there, we tried to find a hotel but it was difficult because women aren't allowed to stay in them. We went to many. Finally we found one which was owned by an Eritrean. He was very kind and let us stay there. After three days we left Kasala, and travelled to Khartoum by lorry. On the way, we had a puncture and so we had to wait for ten hours while the driver went and got a new tyre. The people from a nearby village were very kind and gave us food and water. Finally, we arrived in Khartoum later than night, and the lorry driver asked a taxi-driver to take us to a hotel where there were other Eritreans.

Milete



\*A 'wahyo' is a secret political group.

†The E.P.L.F. is the Eritrean People's Liberation Front. They are fighting for the freedom of Eritrea.

**Look at these sentences and tick the right answer in the box**

- |                                                       |   |                                             |                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Milete decided to leave                            | { | after she was arrested.                     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                                       |   | because a member of her group was arrested. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                                       |   | because there was a water shortage.         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                                       |   |                                             |                          |
| 2. They were carrying buckets                         | { | to fetch water.                             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                                       |   | to get past the Ethiopian soldiers.         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                                       |   | because there was a water shortage.         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                                       |   |                                             |                          |
| 3. They had to travel by night                        | { | because the Ethiopians were dropping bombs. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                                       |   | because they were in an E.P.L.F. lorry.     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                                       |   | because it was a main road.                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                                       |   |                                             |                          |
| 4. Hiring a camel was                                 | { | easy.                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                                       |   | difficult.                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                                       |   |                                             |                          |
| 5. They left Keren                                    | { | on foot.                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                                       |   | in a lorry.                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                                       |   | on a camel.                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                                       |   |                                             |                          |
| 6. It was difficult to find a hotel in Kasala because | { | they were women.                            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                                       |   | they were Eritreans.                        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                                       |   | they were full.                             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                                       |   |                                             |                          |
| 7. They were taken to a hotel in Khartoum by          | { | the lorry driver.                           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                                       |   | a taxi driver.                              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                                       |   | some Eritreans.                             | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Now compare your answers with another student.**

Look at the map of Eritrea and draw the route Milete took.

Now look at Milete's story and underline those parts which tell us:

- i) How she travelled
- ii) Where she travelled to
- iii) How long each stage of the journey took

Use the parts you have underlined to write an outline of her journey.

Milete left Asmara and went into the country.....

.....

.....

.....

### **Personal writing**

NOW think about your journey to England.

- 1. Make a list of the times and places, etc.
- 2. Write the story of your journey.

### **Discuss these questions together.**

- 1. Do you think Milete had to leave her country? Why?
- 2. What happened at the beginning of January? Why was this important?
- 3. Who controlled Asmara, the Ethiopians or the E.P.L.F.?
- 4. Do you think it was difficult to leave the town?
- 5. How did she manage to do it?
- 6. What are 'peasant' clothes? Why do you think she wore these?
- 7. Did she feel frightened? Why?
- 8. How did she travel to Keren?
- 9. Do you think it was easy or difficult to hire a camel?
- 10. Why did they travel to the border by night?
- 11. Did the E.P.L.F. want people to leave the country? Why not?
- 12. How did they travel over the border?
- 13. Why do you think they had problems finding a hotel in Kasala?
- 14. What problems did they have on the way to Khartoum?

Look at the map of Eritrea and draw Milete's route from Asmara to Khartoum.

## Working on specific points of grammar

These materials were devised for use during individual study sessions and provided additional practice in using this irregular form of the simple past tense.

### Using the simple past.

e.g. On Friday morning I got up late. I quickly ate my breakfast and rushed out for the bus. Fortunately I did not have to wait too long and I managed to get to work on time.

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What is the past of these verbs :

go \_\_\_\_\_  
Come \_\_\_\_\_  
see \_\_\_\_\_  
phone \_\_\_\_\_  
tell \_\_\_\_\_  
smell \_\_\_\_\_  
is \_\_\_\_\_  
look \_\_\_\_\_  
need \_\_\_\_\_  
agree \_\_\_\_\_  
happen \_\_\_\_\_  
call \_\_\_\_\_  
wait \_\_\_\_\_  
notice \_\_\_\_\_

### Answers to page 1

go - went  
Come - came  
See - saw  
phone - phoned  
tell - told  
smell - smelt  
is - was  
look - looked  
need - needed  
agree - agreed  
happen - happened  
call - called  
wait - waited  
notice - noticed

2. Look at the picture on page 4.

Write a letter to a friend telling them what happened to you.

But before you do this think about what you could say. Tell someone else the story or record it onto a tape.

3. Check your letter carefully — check the verbs you used. Are they in the past? You can use the list on page 1.

4. Read the story on page 5. This is what you could have written.

5. Do the exercise on page 6. Check your answers with the story on page 5. If you have used different words, do they make sense? Are they in the past?

6. Now write a note to your Landlord. When you went to see him he wasn't in. You left a note to tell him what had happened and that you need a new boiler. Make it brief.



I really must tell you about what happened to me on Friday.

When I went into the bathroom I noticed there was a strong smell of gas. It came from the boiler. I immediately phoned the gasboard and told them I had a gas leak. They told me they would send someone as soon as possible. I waited until 4 pm. Finally a man from the gasboard came. I told him what was wrong. He went to the bathroom and looked at the boiler, and told me it needed replacing. It was very old and dangerous. That evening I went to see my landlord and told him what happened and what the gasman said. I was really surprised when he said he would get a new boiler.

## Grammar

Past tenses - Simple  
past perfect

Fill the gaps in the story. When you have finished check if the word makes sense and if the tense is correct.

### Gas leak

When I \_\_\_\_\_ into the bathroom on Friday I \_\_\_\_\_ there \_\_\_\_\_ a strong smell of gas. It \_\_\_\_\_ from the boiler. I immediately \_\_\_\_\_ the gasboard and \_\_\_\_\_ them I had a gas leak. They \_\_\_\_\_ me they \_\_\_\_\_ send someone as soon as possible. I \_\_\_\_\_ until 4 pm. Finally a man from the gas board \_\_\_\_\_. I \_\_\_\_\_ him what \_\_\_\_\_ wrong. He \_\_\_\_\_ to the bathroom and \_\_\_\_\_ the boiler, and \_\_\_\_\_ me it \_\_\_\_\_ replacing. It \_\_\_\_\_ very old and dangerous. That evening I \_\_\_\_\_ to see my landlord and \_\_\_\_\_ him. What \_\_\_\_\_ and what the gasman \_\_\_\_\_.

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